ENCOUNTER

LITERATURE ARTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY
Nancy Mitford

ISLAND OF MEMORIES
Luigi Barzini Jr.

AN ESSAY ON SNOBBERY
Arthur Koestler

THE MIRACULOUS CHILD
Juan Rulfo

36,000,000 BABIES
William Petersen

THE RUSSIAN INTELLECTUALS: *Hugh Seton-Watson*
FROM COPERNICUS TO EINSTEIN: *Michael Polanyi*
HOLSTEIN'S MEMOIRS AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM: *Herbert Butterfield*

SEPTEMBER 1955 24 *MONTHLY 2s. 6d.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Autumn Books

Excelsior !

PAUL HYDE BONNER

A novel by the author of *SPQR* and *Hotel Talleyrand*: a fine study of a great Swiss banker's benevolent tyranny over both his banking house and his family and the interplay between personal relationships and the international wire-pulling of war-time Zurich. *Literary Guild* Choice. 12/6

The Visitants

ERNEST FROST

A comedy of manners, written with wit and simplicity, turning on the marriage of a distinguished elderly painter with a girl of twenty-nine and the reactions of their circle to the match. *Book Society Recommendation.* 12/6

A Treasury of Yiddish Stories

Fifty-two stories, most of them newly translated, with a preface by Wolf Mankowitz and an admirable introduction to this literature by the editors, Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg. 25/-

Minado

ERLE WILSON

A novel of the Quebec woods by the author of 'the best and deepest account of the lives and deaths of wild creatures I have ever read.' (*New Statesman*): *Coorinna.* 9/6

A Way of Looking

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Forty-eight poems by 'a true lyric poet who has also a strong intellectual grip on her verse.' (Anthony Hartley) 8/6

A Voyage to the Amorous Islands

NEWTON A. ROWE

The true flavour of discovery is preserved in this account of Captain Wallis's voyage to Tahiti in the *Dolphin* in 1767; a book that is unusually fresh and imaginative in its scholarship. Eleven contemporary illustrations. 21/-

The Literary Situation

MALCOLM COWLEY

A 'natural history' of mid-century American writing and writers, by the distinguished American critic who wrote *Exiles Return.* 18/-

A Frenchman Examines His Conscience

JULES ROMAINS

A stringent criticism of contemporary French civic virtue: a book which will provoke much argument here as it did in France. 12/6

Fred Bason's Third Diary

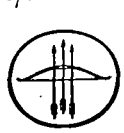
FRED BASON

Edited and introduced by Michael Sadleir, with a caricature by Nicolas Bentley. The Cockney '*Ego*-ist' is as good as ever. 10/6

The Boy Friend

SANDY WILSON

The book of 'the gayest show in town today' (*The Times*), with charming and absurdly 'twentyish illustrations by the author. 10/6



ANDRE DEUTSCH

12–14 Carlisle Street : Soho Square London W1

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ENCOUNTER

SEPTEMBER 1955 VOL. V, NO. 3

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

This Month's *Encounter* 2

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY — *Nancy Mitford* 5

GHOSTS (POEM) — *Elizabeth Jennings* 12

THE MIRACULOUS CHILD (STORY) — *Juan Rulfo* 13

ISLAND OF MEMORIES — *Luigi Barzini Jr.* 20

ON ANY PAIR OF GREAT LOVERS (POEM) — *Roy Ashwell* 27

AN ESSAY ON SNOBBERY — *Arthur Koestler* 28

THE MOUNTAIN (POEM) — *W. S. Merwin* 40

THE INTELLECTUALS:—(V) RUSSIA — *Hugh Seton-Watson* 43

FROM COPERNICUS TO EINSTEIN — *Michael Polanyi* 54

Table Talk — *D. W. Brogan* 64

Letter From America

36,000,000 BABIES — *William Petersen* 66

THE BOY PROUST (POEM) — *Arnold Weinstein* 70

Books

HOLSTEIN'S MEMOIRS AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM — *Herbert Butterfield* 71

THE GRANDCHILDREN OF SOCIALISM — *Christopher Sykes* 79

OVER THE BORDER AND ROUND THE BEND — *Hilary Corke* 82

THIS GENTL'D ISLE — *Angus Wilson* 84

TAMING LEVIATHAN — *C. V. Wedgwood* 87

ENCOUNTER is published monthly at Panton House, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1
2s. 6d. per number. Yearly subscription 30s. (U.S. $6.00) (India 12 rupees)
U.S. subscriptions may be entered at British Publications Inc.
30 East 60th Street, New York 22

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This Month's *ENCOUNTER*:—

HYPOCRISY has always been regarded as a peculiarly English vice. The English, of course, do not accept the attribution. But neither do they bother to refute it. English society and the English character are so uncandid in their structure, so esoteric in their meanings, that the English lack patience to begin to explain them to outsiders. The science of sociology is still in its infancy in this country; the reason doubtless is that sociology is the practice of self-exposure. It is all well and good for Americans to go poking around in their social structure, codifying and charting the last detail of class relations: they have a tendency to exhibitionism in any case —witness their fondness for psychoanalysis. "We English," on the other hand, regard such manners as bordering on the indecent. There are things known that are best not said. As a result, there is not a single book on such a crucial question as variations in speech habits among the different social classes of England, nor is there any book that gives an X-ray picture of a typical English community (as did Robert Lynd's *Middletown* for the United States). England is a sensitive area, and is covered up.

We must all therefore be grateful to Nancy Mitford for her article on the English Aristocracy, which makes a breach in this chintz curtain. Not that she has anything shocking to relate; she has not written an *exposé*, nor revealed a hidden scandal. But she has helped to make clear a picture hitherto vague and blurred. After all, how many of us knew that there is a difference between saying a man is "wealthy" and saying he is "rich"? Well, now we know.

In future issues of ENCOUNTER, we intend to continue digging in this vein. Though Mr. Geoffrey Gorer has done some preliminary work, there is much more to do. What is it like to be a member of the industrial working-class in the Welfare State? Of the newly-rich? The aged-poor? The scientific technocracy? To be sure, one must be prepared for scepticism on the part of the rest of the world, no matter how deep we go. Will the average Italian ever really believe what Mr. Gorer has discovered: that the ordinary Englishman *likes* the police? Or will he suspect an even greater, an even more machiavellian, hypocrisy? Never mind. Every nation has its incommunicable truths, even after all the facts are told. The important thing is to make a distinction between plain facts and secret truths, so that we can simultaneously enjoy the knowledge we know and the knowledge of what others cannot know.

AS MISS MITFORD points out, your true aristocrat has no sense of shame. That is to say, he is incapable of being a snob, for he lacks the necessary dimension of self-consciousness. Just as Being precedes Existence, so aristocracy precedes snobs. It seems that our current usage of the term "snob," in the sense of someone who seeks to associate with persons of greater social importance than himself, is little more than a century old. Previously, a snob was simply a person of little breeding or taste; often it was a mere synonym for a cobbler or a cobbler's apprentice; while in Cambridge it referred to a townsman as opposed to a gownsman. The word, then, like the person, is a social climber: an unpleasant creature.

In his provocative "Essay on Snobbery," Mr. Arthur Koestler speaks of "the obsessive preoccupation of the British intelligentsia with the aristocracy," and appears to accuse the intellectuals of snobbery. True, the gravamen of his charge is lightened considerably by being no less directed against everyone else, Mr. Koestler himself included. If snobbery is "a social neurosis on a vast and unprecedented scale, which reflects the general distortion of values in all fields of modern civilisation," there is no obloquy, or hardly any, attached to it. Nevertheless, social

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neurosis or no social neurosis, no one likes to be called a snob.

How well taken is Mr. Koestler's point? It is hard to say: the more closely one looks at the matter, the more complicated it gets. It is always possible, for instance, that this "obsessive preoccupation with the aristocracy," if it does exist, has more to do with art than with snobbery. Mr. Cyril Connolly has recently suggested just this, in an article published in an American literary magazine:

> I have always thought that great writers should be among the great people of the world and have access to those who make history, and to the society around them. This seems to me an axiom where novelists are concerned; even Flaubert was the guest of the French Emperor; Dickens, Thackeray, Balzac, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Proust all moved in the best available society. Power and rank are two of the essential colours of the novelist's palette and there is a certain monotony about the production, however talented, of those who neglect them. Poets, too, have a natural affinity for the courts of princes. Now one of the effects of the levelling down of society and the general impoverishment of authors in this country is that very few ever make enough money to hold their own with the ruling classes. The artist is condemned to a petty-bourgeois existence. Has any novelist or poet access to the new court circles or even to the leaders of the Tory Party? Evelyn Waugh still remains the only novelist to deal with what used to be called "high life," for which he has put up with repeated accusations of snobbery. Novelists are students of character and love and both are best observed among those at the centre of great events or who have the means and the leisure to indulge their passions.

Is this an ingenious apologia for snobbery or an eloquent appeal for the right prerogatives of art? And what precisely is the relation between snobbery and art in England? Here, too, there is a national secret that has not yet been divulged. One suspects that it might be the greatest secret of all.

NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:—

JUAN RULFO is a leading young Mexican writer. The English version of his story by Miss Irene Nicholson was made while she was on a translation scholarship from the Centro Mexicano de Escritores. . . . LUIGI BARZINI JR., the veteran Italian journalist, contributes regularly to the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan. . . . ARTHUR KOESTLER's article will be included in a collection of essays, *The Trail of the Dinosaur*, to be published in the near future. . . . W. S. MERWIN's new book of poetry will be published by Rupert Hart-Davis some time next year. . . . HUGH SETON-WATSON is Professor of Russian History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London University. . . . MICHAEL POLANYI is Professor of Social Studies at Manchester University. . . . WILLIAM PETERSEN, who teaches sociology at the University of California, contributed the article "Dutch Interiors" to our December 1954 issue. . . . HERBERT BUTTERFIELD is Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. His book, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship*, will be published this autumn by Cambridge University Press.

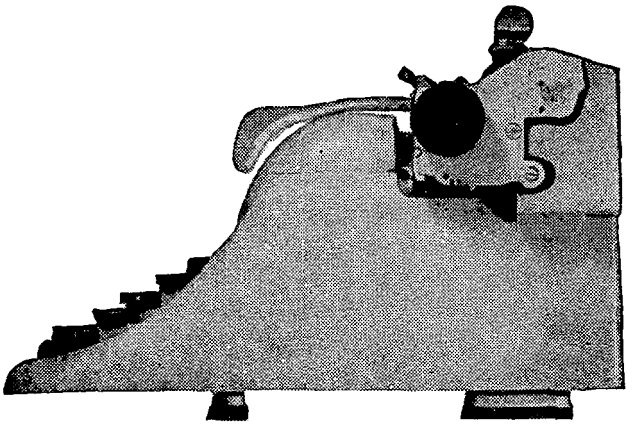
ENCOUNTER is published by
Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.
7 John Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.1.
for
THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM
104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France

PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Denis de Rougemont

SECRETARY-GENERAL
Nicolas Nabokov

The views expressed in the pages of ENCOUNTER *are to be attributed to the writers, not to the sponsors.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Lexikon

A British-made machine of world-wide reputation

olivetti

It is by design - by sheer excellence of design - not by mere chance, that the products of Olivetti in the business offices of almost every country in the world, have a reputation for superb workmanship, and consistent, reliable, performance.

The Olivetti Lexikon - made in Great Britain by British Olivetti — is the latest product in line with this long and firmly established tradition. It is designed with every up-to-date worthwhile feature to ease the typist's task in producing immaculate work — and designed to go on doing so with sturdy imperturbability throughout years and years of service.

BRITISH OLIVETTI LTD.

10 Berkeley Square – London – W1

SALES BRANCHES | London – 32/34 Worship Street – EC2
Glasgow – 115/207 Summerlee Street – E3

Authorized dealers throughout the country

L3

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nancy Mitford

The English Aristocracy

THE English aristocracy may seem to be on the verge of decadence, but it is the only real aristocracy left in the world today. It has real political power through the House of Lords and a real social position through the Queen. An aristocracy in a republic is like a chicken whose head has been cut off: it may run about in a lively way, but in fact it is dead. There is nothing to stop a Frenchman, German, or Italian from calling himself the Duke of Carabosse if he wants to, and in fact the Continent abounds with invented titles. But in England the Queen is the fountain of honours and when she bestows a peerage upon a subject she bestows something real and unique.

The great distinction between the English aristocracy and any other has always been that, whereas abroad every member of a noble family is noble, in England none are noble except the head of the family. In spite of the fact that they enjoy courtesy titles, the sons and daughters of lords are commoners—though not so common as baronets and their wives who take precedence after honourables. (So, of course, do all knights, except Knights of the Garter who come after the eldest sons and the daughters of barons, but before the younger sons.) The descendants of younger sons, who, on the Continent would all be counts or barons, in England have no titles and sit even below knights. Furthermore, the younger sons and daughters of the very richest lords receive, by English custom, but little money from their families, barely enough to live on. The sons are given the same education as their eldest brother and then turned out, as soon as they are grown up, to fend for themselves; the daughters are given no education at all, the general idea being that they must find some man to keep them—which, in fact, they usually do. The rule of primogeniture has kept together the huge fortunes of English lords; it has also formed our class system.

But there is in England no aristocratic class that forms a caste. We have about 950 peers, not all of whom, incidentally, sit in the House of Lords. Irish peers have no seats, though some Irish peers have a subsidiary U.K. peerage giving a seat; Scottish peers elect sixteen representatives from among themselves. Peeresses in their own right are not, as yet, admitted. Most of the peers share the education, usage, and point of view of a vast upper middle class, but the upper middle class does not, in its turn, merge imperceptibly into the middle class. There is a very definite border line, easily recognisable by hundreds of small but significant landmarks.

WHEN I speak of these matters I am always accused of being a snob, so, to illustrate my point, I propose to quote from Professor Alan Ross of Birmingham University. Professor Ross has written a paper,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

printed in Helsinki in 1954, for the *Bulletin de la Société Neo-philologique de Helsinki*, on "Upper Class English Usage." Nobody is likely to accuse either this learned man or his Finnish readers of undue snobbishness. The Professor, pointing out that it is solely by their language that the upper classes nowadays are distinguished (since they are neither cleaner, richer, nor better-educated than anybody else) has invented a useful formula: U (for upper class) -speaker versus non-U-speaker. Such exaggeratedly non-U usage as "serviette" for "napkin" he calls non-U indicators. Since "a piece of mathematics or a novel written by a member of the upper class is not likely to differ in any way from one written by a member of another class . . . in writing it is in fact only modes of address, postal addresses and habits of beginning and ending letters that serve to demarcate the class.". . . The names of many houses are themselves non-U; the ideal U-address is PQR where P is a place name, Q a describer, and R the name of a county, as "Shirwell Hall, Salop." (Here I find myself in disagreement with Professor Ross—in my view abbreviations such as Salop, Herts, or Glos, are decidedly non-U. Any sign of undue haste, in fact, is apt to be non-U, and I go so far as preferring, except for business letters, not to use air mail.) "But," adds Professor Ross, "today few gentlemen can maintain this standard and they often live in houses with non-U names such as Fairmeads or El Nido." Alas!

He speaks of the U-habit of silence, and perhaps does not make as much of it as he might. Silence is the only possible U-response to many embarrassing modern situations: the ejaculation of "cheers" before drinking, for example, or "it was so nice seeing you," after saying goodbye. In silence, too, one must endure the use of the Christian name by comparative strangers and the horror of being introduced by Christian and surname without any prefix. This unspeakable usage sometimes occurs in letters—Dear XX—which, in silence, are quickly torn up, by me.

After discoursing at some length on pronunciation, the professor goes on to vocabulary and gives various examples of U and non-U usage.

Cycle is non-U against U *bike*.
Dinner: U-speakers eat *luncheon* in the middle of the day and *dinner* in the evening. Non-U-speakers (also U-children and U-dogs) have their *dinner* in the middle of the day.
Greens is non-U for U *vegetables*.
Home: non-U—"they have a lovely *home*"; U—"they've a very nice *house*."
Ill: "I was *ill* on the boat" is non-U against U *sick*.
Mental: non-U for U *mad*.
Note paper: non-U for U *writing paper*.
Toilet paper: non-U for U *lavatory paper*.
Wealthy: non-U for U *rich*.

To these I would add:
Sweet: non-U for U *pudding*.
Dentures: non-U for U *false teeth*. This, and *glasses* for *spectacles*, almost amount to non-U indicators.
Wire: non-U for U *telegram*.
Phone: a non-U indicator.

(One must add that the issue is sometimes confused by U-speakers using non-U indicators as a joke. Thus Uncle Matthew in *The Pursuit of Love* speaks of his *dentures*.)

Finally Professor Ross poses the question: Can a non-U-speaker become a U-speaker? His conclusion is that an adult can never achieve complete success "because one word or phrase will suffice to brand an apparent U-speaker as originally non-U (for U-speakers themselves never make mistakes)." I am not quite sure about this. Usage changes very quickly and I even know undisputed U-speakers who pronounce girl "gurl," which twenty years ago would have been unthinkable. All the same, it is true that one U-speaker recognises another U-speaker almost as soon as he opens his mouth, though U-speaker A may deplore certain lapses in the conversation of U-speaker B.

From these U-speakers spring the sensible men of ample means who generally seem to rule our land. When the means of these sensible men become sufficiently ample they can very easily be ennobled, should they wish it, and join the House of Lords. It might therefore be supposed that there is no

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aristocracy at all in England, merely an upper middle class, some of whom are lords; but, oddly enough, this is not so. A lord does not have to be born to his position and, indeed, can acquire it through political activities, or the sale of such unaristocratic merchandise as beer, but though he may not be a U-speaker he becomes an aristocrat as soon as he receives his title. The Queen turns him from socialist leader, or middle-class businessman, into a nobleman, and his outlook from now on will be the outlook of an aristocrat.

ANCESTRY has never counted much in England. The English lord knows himself to be such a very genuine article that, when looking for a wife, he can rise above such baubles as seize quartiers. Kind hearts, in his view, are more than coronets, and large tracts of town property more than Norman blood. He marries for love, and is rather inclined to love where money is; he rarely marries in order to improve his coat of arms. (Heiresses have caused the extinction as well as the enrichment of many an English family, since the heiress, who must be an only child if she is to be really rich, often comes of barren or enfeebled stock.) This unconcern for pedigree leads people to suppose that the English lords are a jumped-up lot, and that their families are very seldom "genuine" and "old." One often hears it said, "No Englishman alive today would be eligible to drive in the carriage of a King of France." "Nobody really has Norman blood." "The true aristocracy of England was wiped out in the Wars of the Roses." And so on.

There is some truth in all these statements, but it is not the whole truth. Many of our oldest families have never been ennobled. Some no longer hold peerages. The ancient Scrope family has, in its time, held the baronies of Scrope of Marsham and Scrope of Bolton, the earldoms of Wiltshire and of Sunderland, the sovereignty of the Isle of Man, but the head of the family is now Mr. Scrope. If he should be offered a peerage he would no doubt proudly refuse. The only existing families known to descend from knights who came over with William the Conqueror in time to fight at Hastings, the Malets, the Giffards, and the Gresleys, are another case in point. Of the Norman knights who came during William's reign or later, some were never anything but country gentlemen, but some are the direct ancestors of modern peers: St. John, Talbot, West, Curzon, Clinton, Grey, Seymour, St. Aubyn, Sinclair, Haig, and Hay, for instance. There are 100 peers of England from before the Union (including Prince Charles, as Duke of Cornwall). All of them are descended in the female line from King Edward III, except possibly Lord Byron, though a little research would probably find him an Edward III descent. All peers, except barons, are officially styled "Cousin" by the Queen; as regards most dukes and earls this is not so much fiction as a distant truth. Only 26 earls have been created in this century and they have all been great men like Lloyd George and Haig. (The Haigs have borne arms and lived at Bemersyde since the 12th century but had never previously been ennobled.)

The dukes are rather new creations. When James I came to the throne there were no dukes at all, the high traitors Norfolk and Somerset having had their dukedoms attainted. They were both restored in 1660. Between 1660 and 1760, 18 dukedoms were created. On the whole, Englishmen are made dukes as a reward for being rich or royal (4 descend from bastards of Charles II), though dukedoms have sometimes been bestowed for merit. The oldest title is that of Earl. Several medieval earldoms still exist. Sixty-five barons hold titles from before 1711. Three hundred and twenty-seven of the present-day peerages were created before 1800, 382 belong to families which have borne arms in the direct male line since before 1485 and which are therefore eligible, as far as birth is concerned, to be Knights of Malta.

BUT whether their families are "old" or "new" is of small account—the lords all have one thing in common: they share an aristocratic attitude to life. What is this attitude? The purpose of the aristocrat is to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lead, therefore his functions are military and political. There can be no doubt of the military excellence of our noblemen. Two hundred and fourteen peers alive today have been decorated in battle or mentioned in despatches. The families of the premier duke and the premier earl of England hold the George Cross. In politics, including the unglamorous and often boring local politics, they have worked hard for no reward and done their best according to their lights.

The purpose of the aristocrat is most emphatically not to work for money. His ancestors may have worked in order to amass the fortune which he enjoys, though on the whole the vast riches of the English lords come from sources unconnected with honest toil; but he will seldom do the same. His mind is not occupied with money, it turns upon other matters. When money is there he spends it on maintaining himself in his station. When it is no longer there he ceases to spend, he draws in his horns. Even the younger sons of lords seem, in all ages, to have been infected with this point of view: there is nothing so rare as for the scion of a noble house to make a fortune by his own efforts. In the old days they went into professions—the Army, the Navy, diplomacy, and the Church—in which it is impossible to earn more than a living. Those who went to the colonies were administrators, they rarely feathered their nests—the great nabobs were essentially middle class. Nowadays younger sons go into the City, but I have yet to hear of one making a large fortune; more often they lose in unwise speculations what little capital they happen to own.

All this should not be taken as a sign that our lords are lazy or unenterprising. The point is that, in their view, effort is unrelated to money. Now this view has, to a large extent, communicated itself to the English race and nation with the result that our outlook is totally different from that of our American cousins, who have never had an aristocracy. Americans relate all effort, all work, and all of life itself to the dollar. Their talk is of nothing but dollars. The English seldom sit happily chatting for hours on end about pounds. In England, public business is its own reward, nobody would go into Parliament in order to become rich, neither do riches bring public appointments. Our ambassadors to foreign states are experienced diplomatists, not socially ambitious millionairesses.

THIS idiosyncratic view of money has its good side and its bad. Let us glance at the case history of Lord Fortinbras. Fortinbras is ruined—we are now in the 1930's. (All English noblemen, according to themselves, are ruined, a fantasy I shall deal with later, but Fortinbras really is.) He is not ruined because of death duties, since his father died when he was a child, before they became so heavy, but because he and his forbears have always regarded their estates with the eyes of sportsmen rather than of cultivators. It is useless for him to plead that the policy of cheap corn has been his downfall; an intelligent landowner has always been able to make money with prize cattle, racehorses, market gardens, timber, and so on. But Fortinbras's woods have been looked after by gamekeepers and not by woodmen, his farms have been let to tenants chosen for their tenderness towards foxes and partridges rather than for their agricultural efficiency. His land is undercapitalised, his cottagers live in conditions no better than those of their Saxon forebears, water and electric light are laid on in his stables but not in the dwellings of his tenantry. He has made various unwise speculations and lost a "packet" on the Turf. In short, he deserves to be ruined and he is ruined.

Now what does he do? He is young, healthy, and not stupid; his wife, the daughter of another peer, is handsome, bossy, and energetic. She is the kind of woman who, in America, would be running something with enormous efficiency and earning thousands. They have two babies, Dominick and Caroline, and a Nanny. Does it occur to either Lord or Lady Fortinbras to get a job and retrieve the family fortunes? It does not. First of all they sell everything that is not

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entailed, thus staving off actual want. They shut up most of the rooms in their house, send away the servants (except, of course, Nanny) and get the Dowager Lady Fortinbras and her sister to come and cook, clean, dust, and take trays upstairs to the nursery. Old Lady Fortinbras is quite useful, and Lady Enid is a treasure. The Fortinbrases realise that they are very lucky, and if at heart they wish there were a mother's hall for the two ladies to sit in of an evening, they never say so, even to each other. Fortinbras chops the wood, stokes the boiler, brings in the coal, washes the Morris Cowley, and drives off in it to attend the County Council and sit on the Bench. Lady Fortinbras helps in the house, digs in the border, exercises the Border terriers, and also does a great deal of committee work. They are both on the go from morning to night, but it is a go that does not bring in one penny. Their friends and neighbours all say, "Aren't the Fortinbrases wonderful?"

Comes the war. They clear the decks by sending Nanny and the children to an American couple, the Karamazovs, whom they once met at St. Moritz and who have sent them Christmas cards ever since. Fortinbras goes off with his territorials and Lady Fortinbras joins the A.T.S. Their war records are brilliant in the extreme, their energy, courage, and instinct for leadership have at last found an outlet, and in no time at all they both become generals. After the war they are not surprised to find themselves more ruined than ever. The Karamazovs, whose lives for several years have been made purgatory by Dominick, Caroline, and Nanny, especially Nanny, send in a modest bill for the schooling of the young people which Fortinbras has no intention of settling. It would seem unreasonable to pay for one's children to be taught to murder the English language and taught, apparently, nothing else whatever. Dominick, failing to get into Eton, has had to be sent to some dreadful school in Scotland. Besides, what did the Karamazovs do in the war? Nothing, according to Nanny, but flop in and out of a swimming pool. The Karamazovs come to England expecting to be thanked, fêted, and paid, only to find that their friends have left for the Northern Capitals.

Now the Fortinbrases are getting on, over fifty. Dominick having come of age, they have broken the entail and sold everything, very badly, as the house is full of dry rot and the farms are let to tenants who cannot be dislodged. However, a little money does result from the sale. They arrange a mews flat behind Harrods where, generals once again, they will continue to cook and wash up for the rest of their days. They both still sit on endless committees, Fortinbras goes to the House of Lords, they kill themselves with overwork, and have never, except for their Army pay, earned one single penny. "Aren't the Fortinbrases wonderful?" Well yes, in a way they are.

Now, while the Fortinbrases have the typical aristocratic outlook on money, the state of their finances is by no means typical. Most people, nowadays, take it for granted that the aristocracy is utterly impoverished, a view carefully fostered by the lords themselves. It takes a shooting affray, letting police and reporters into a country house, to remind the ordinary citizen that establishments exist where several menservants wait on one young woman at dinner. There are still many enormous fortunes in the English aristocracy, into which income tax and death duties have made no appreciable inroads. Arundel, Petworth, Hatfield, Woburn, Hardwicke, Blenheim, Haddon, Drumlanrig, Alnwick, Stratfield Saye, Harewood, Knole, Knowsley, Wilton, Holkham, Glamis, Cullen, Cliveden, Highclere, Althorp, Mentmore—all vast houses—are still inhabited by lords who have inherited them, and this little list is a mere fraction of the whole. The treasures such houses contain are stupendous. When the Duke of Buccleuch came to visit the Louvre, the curator, who had been to England and seen the Duke's collection of French furniture, greeted him with the words: "I apologise for the furniture of the Louvre, M. le Duc."

Another English duke owns a collection of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

incunables second only to that formerly in the possession of the Kings of Spain, and more Groslier bindings than the Bibliothèque Nationale. A jeweller told me that out of the one hundred finest diamonds in the world, sixty are in English families. One could go on citing such instances indefinitely.

The English, so censorious of those foreigners (the French peasantry for instance) who do not pay their taxes as they should, have themselves brought tax evasion within legal limits to a fine art. Death duties can be avoided altogether if the owner of an estate gives it to his heir and then lives another five years. One agreeable result of this rule is that old lords are cherished as never before. Their heirs, so far from longing to step into their shoes, will do anything to keep them alive. Doctors and blood donors hover near them, they are not allowed to make the smallest effort, or to be worried or upset, and are encouraged to live in soft climates and salubrious spots.

The crippling effects of supertax also can be overcome in various ways by those who own large capital sums. The aristocrat can augment his fortune in many a curious manner, since he is impervious to a sense of shame (all aristocrats are: shame is a bourgeois notion). The lowest peasant of the Danube would stick at letting strangers into his home for 2s. 6d., but our dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons not only do this almost incredible thing, they glory in it, they throw themselves into the sad commerce with rapture, and compete as to who among them can draw the greatest crowds. It is the first topic of conversation in noble circles today, the tourists being referred to in terms of sport rather than of cash—a sweepstake on the day's run, or the bag counted after the shoot.

"I get twice as many as Reggie, but Bert does better than me."

The baiting of the trap is lovingly considered.

"Mummy dresses up in her Coronation robes, they can't resist it."

"I say, old boy, look out—you don't want to pay entertainment tax."

"No, no—I've taken counsel's opinion."

"We've started a pets' cemetery—a quid for a grave, three quid for a stone, and a fiver if Daphne writes a poem for it."

Of course the fellow countrymen of people who will descend to such methods of raising cash imagine that they must be driven to it by direst need. The fact is they thoroughly enjoy it. Also it has become a matter of policy to appear very poor. The lords are retrenching visibly, and are especially careful to avoid any form of ostentation: for instance, only five of them saw fit to attend the last coronation in their family coaches. Coronets on luggage, motor cars, and so on are much less used than formerly. Aristocrats no longer keep up any state in London, where family houses hardly exist now. Here many of them have shown a sad lack of civic responsibility, as we can see by looking at poor London today. At the beginning of this century practically all the residential part of the West End belonged to noblemen and the Crown. A more charming, elegant capital city would have been far to seek. To the Crown—more specifically, I believe to King George V in person—and to two Dukes, Westminster and Bedford, we owe the fact that London is not yet exactly like Moscow, a conglomeration of dwellings. Other owners cheerfully sold their houses and "developed" their property without a thought for the visible result. Park Lane, most of Mayfair, the Adelphi, and so on bear witness to a barbarity which I, for one, cannot forgive.

THE lords have never cared very much for London, and are, in this respect, the exact opposite of their French counterparts who loathe the country. But even where his country house is concerned, the English nobleman, whose forebears were such lovers of beauty, seems to have lost all æsthetic sense, and it is sad to see the havoc he often brings to his abode, both inside and out. His ancestors spent months abroad, buying pictures and statues, which he cheerfully sells in order to spend months abroad. Should one of his guests perceive that a blackened square of canvas in a spare bedroom is a genuine Caravaggio, that picture will appear at Chris-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties before you can say Jack Robinson, though there is no necessity whatever for such a sale. The Caravaggio buyer planted his estate with avenues and coppices and clumps of cedar trees. The Caravaggio seller fiddles about with herbaceous borders, one of the most hideous conceptions known to man. He never seems to plant anything larger than a flowering prunus, never builds ornamental bridges, or digs lakes, or adds wings to his house. The last nobleman to build a folly on his estate must have been Lord Berners and he was regarded as foolish indeed to do such a thing. The noble eccentric, alas, seems to be dying out. Lord Berners was one, another was the late Duke of Bedford, pacifist, zoologist, and a good man. One of the chapters of his autobiography, I seem to remember, was headed "Spiders I have Known," and he tells of one spider he knew whose favourite food was roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. The great days of patronage, too, are over, though there are country houses which still shelter some mild literary figure as librarian. The modern nobleman cannot, however, be blamed for no longer patronising art, music, and letters. Artists, musicians, and writers are today among the very richest members of the community and even an English aristocrat could hardly afford to maintain Mr. Somerset Maugham, M. Stravinsky, or M. Picasso as part of his establishment.

Voltaire very truly said that those who own are those who wish to own: this wish seems to have left the English lords. Divest, divest, is the order of the day. The nobleman used to study a map of his estate to see how it could be enlarged, filling out a corner here, extending a horizon there. Nowadays he has no such ambitions; he would much rather sell than buy. The family is not considered as it used to be; the ancestors are no longer revered, indeed they are wilfully forgotten, partly perhaps from a feeling of guilt when all that they so carefully amassed is being so carelessly scattered. The dead are hardly mourned. "Far the best for him," the children say, cheerfully (so long, of course, as he has lived the requisite five years). Nobody wears black any more. The younger generation is no longer planned for, and there is a general feeling of "*après nous le déluge*."

THE instinct of the lords to divest themselves of age-long influence and rights extends to their influence and rights in the Church. Most of them are members of the Church of England; though there are forty-seven Roman Catholics with seats in the House of Lords. On the whole, the lords, in common with most of their fellow countrymen, have always regarded religious observance as a sort of patriotic duty. The Church is the Church of England and must be supported to show that we are not as foreigners are. A friend of mine voiced this attitude during the war: "Well, you know, I don't do fire-watching or Home Guard and I feel one must do something to help the war, so I always go to Church on Sunday." I am sure he did not imagine that his prayers would drive back the German hordes; he went as a gesture of social solidarity. Hitherto, the livings of our Church have been the gift of landowners, who have generally chosen downright, muscular Christians of low Church leanings. "Don't want lace and smells in my Church." Zeal has always been frowned upon. As it is impossible to remove a parson once he is installed in his living, some of the most ringing rows of all time have been between the Manor and the Vicarage. Now, however, faithful to the spirit of divest, divest, the temporal lords are busily putting their livings at the disposal of their spiritual colleagues, the Bishops. Many people think that this will lead to more lace, more smells, and more un-English zeal in the Church, and indeed greatly alter its character. Incidentally, the marriage customs of the peerage have lately become very lax. One peer in eight has divested himself of his wife, and foreigners notice that there are rather more duchesses than dukes in London society today.

As for the House of Lords which gives the English aristocrat his unique position, Lord Hailsham, himself an unwilling member, says that the majority of peers are voting for

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its abolition "with their feet," by simply neglecting their hereditary duties. It must be said that the number of regular attendants has never been very large, and the august chamber has always been characterised by an atmosphere of the dormitory if not of the morgue. This is distressing to an active young fellow like Lord Hailsham but it is nothing new. One of the merits of the Upper House has been to consist of a hard core of politicians reinforced now and then by experts, and only flooded out in times of crisis by all its members. These have hitherto proved not unrepresentative of public opinion. Now, however, it seems that it is hardly possible to get through the work, so small is the attendance.

Does this apparent abdication of the lords in so many different directions mean that the English aristocracy is in full decadence and will soon exist only like the appendix in the human body, a useless and sometimes harmful relic of the past? It would not be safe to assume so. The English lord has been nurtured on the land and is conversant with the cunning ways of the animal kingdom. He has often seen the grouse settle into the heather to rise and be shot at no more. He has noticed that enormous riches are not well looked on in the modern world and that in most countries his genus is extinct. It may be that he who, for a thousand years has weathered so many a storm, religious, dynastic, and political, is taking cover in order to weather yet one more. It may be that he will succeed. He must, of course, be careful not to overdo the protective colouring. An aristocracy cannot exist as a secret society. Nor must he overdo an appearance of destitution. There is the sad precedent of George Neville who was deprived of his dukedom (Bedford) by act of Parliament because "as is openly known he hath not, nor by inheritance may have, any livelihood to support the name, estate and dignity. . . ."

But the English lord is a wily old bird who seldom overdoes anything. It is his enormous strength.

Ghosts

Those houses haunt in which we leave
Something undone. It is not those
Great words or silence of love

That spread their echoes through a place
And fill the locked-up, unbreathed gloom.
Ghosts do not haunt with any face

That we have known; they only come
With arrogance to thrust at us
Our own omissions in a room.

The words we would not speak they use,
The deeds we dared not act they flaunt,
Our nervous silences they bruise;

It is our helplessness they choose
And our refusals that they haunt.

Elizabeth Jennings

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Juan Rulfo

The Miraculous Child

OLD women. Daughters of Lucifer! I saw them coming, all together, in a procession. Dressed in black, sweating like mules beneath the rays of the sun. I saw them in the distance raising the dust like a drove of cattle. Black, every one of them. They came along the Amula road, singing between prayers, in the heat, with their huge black scapularies blackened still more, and the sweat from their faces dripping down on to them.

I saw them coming and I hid. I knew what they were up to and whom they were looking for. That's why I hurried to hide at the bottom of the corral, holding up my trousers as I ran.

But they entered and found me there. They said, "Ave María Purísima!"

I was squatting on a stone, doing nothing, just sitting there with my trousers down so they'd see me like that and not come near. But they only said, "Ave María Purísima!" And they kept on drawing nearer.

Old Indian women! They ought to be ashamed! They made the sign of the cross and came nearer till they were right on top of me, all of them together, bunched like a handful of flowers, dripping sweat and with their hair falling loose and their faces like rain.

"We came to see you, Lucas Lucatero. We came from Amula, just to see you. Near here they told us you were in your house; but we didn't reckon you'd be so firmly fixed there; not in such a place or about such a business. We thought you had gone to feed the geese, that's why we came in too. We came to see you."

Those old women! Old and ugly as scared donkeys!

"Tell me what you want!" I said to them while I did up my trousers and they covered their eyes so as not to see.

"We have a commission for you. We've looked for you in Santo Santiago and in Santa Inés, but they told us you didn't live there any more, that you'd moved to this ranch. And so we came here. We're from Amula."

I knew already where they had come from and who they were; I could even have told them their names, but I pretended not to understand.

"Well, Lucas Lucatero, at last we've found you, thanks to God."

I invited them into the hall and brought them some chairs to sit on. I asked if they were hungry or if they would like at least a jug of water to wet their mouths.

They sat wiping off their sweat with their scapularies.

"No, thank you," they said. "We didn't come to trouble you. We've come with a request."

"You know me, don't you, Lucas Lucatero?" one of them asked.

"By sight," I said. "I seem to have seen you somewhere. You're not by any chance Pancha Fregoso, who let Homobono Ramos rape you?"

"That's who I am, yes, but I didn't let

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

anyone rape me. Those were only stories. We both got lost looking for cactus. I belong to the congregation and wouldn't have let that happen on any account. . . ."

"How, Pancha?"

"What an evil mind you have, Lucas. You still have your old habit of going about slandering people. But now you've recognised me I want to take the opportunity of telling you what I came for."

"Don't you want even a drink of water?" I asked them again.

"Don't put yourself to any trouble, but now you've been so insistent we won't refuse."

I brought them a jug full of myrtle water and they drank it.

Then I brought them another, and they drank again. Then I put beside them a jug of river water. They left it there for the time being, because, so they said, they would begin to be very thirsty when their digestion started.

TEN women sitting in a line, in their black clothes, like rooting hogs. The daughters of Ponciano, of Emiliano, of Crescenciano, of Toribio who owned the tavern, and of Anastasio the barber.

Hell and bloody murder! Not one of them even tolerable. All of them in their fifties. Withered like magnolias, dry and closed up. Nothing to choose among them.

"And what are you looking for here?"

"We came to see you."

"Now you've seen me. I'm well. Don't worry about me."

"We've come a long way. To this out-of-the-way spot. Without a home or anybody to care for you. We had difficulty finding you after asking all over the place."

"I'm not hiding. I live here very nicely away from the bustle. And what is your mission, if I may ask?" I asked them.

"Well it's this. . . . But don't trouble to give us anything to eat. We ate already at the Torcacita's house. There they gave us all something. So put yourself at ease. Sit here in front of us so we can see you and so you can hear us."

I couldn't feel easy. I wanted to go out to the corral again. I heard the hens clucking and I wanted to get the eggs before the rabbits ate them.

"I'm going to fetch the eggs," I told them.

"We've already eaten, we really have. Don't put yourself to any trouble for us."

"I have two rabbits that run loose there and eat the eggs. I'll come back in a moment."

And I went to the corral.

I had it in my mind not to return. To go out by the door that looked on to the hills and leave that row of old drivellers sitting.

I took a glance at the pile of stones I had heaped up in a corner, and I saw the shape of a sepulchre. Then I began scattering them, throwing them all over the place, a stream of them here, another there. They were smooth stones from the river bed, and I was able to throw them a long way. Diabolical old women! They'd set me to work. I don't know why it entered their heads to come.

I left my task and went back inside.

I made them a present of the eggs.

"Did you kill the rabbits? We saw you throwing stones at them. We'll keep the eggs for a little later. You shouldn't have troubled."

"There in your bosom they'll begin hatching, better leave them somewhere else."

"You're always the same, Lucas Lucatero. You're always up to your silly remarks. We're not so warm either."

"I don't know anything about that. But it's certainly hot here."

What I wanted was to lead them by the nose. Get them talking of something else while I thought of a way of putting them out of my house and so they wouldn't want to come back. But I couldn't think of anything.

I knew they'd been looking for me since January, a little after Anacleto Morones had disappeared. Lots of people had told me that the old women of the Congregation of Amula were on my tracks. They were the only people who could have any interest in Anacleto Morones. And now here they were.

I COULD go on talking to them or putting them off one way or another till it was

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

night and they would have to go away. They wouldn't risk passing the night in my house.

There was a moment when it began to come to that: when the daughter of Ponciano said that they wanted to finish the business quickly to go back early to Amula. That was when I let them know they didn't have to worry, that there was enough room and more than enough petates for them all, even if they had to sleep on the floor. They all said no, for what would people say if they discovered they had spent the night alone in my house, and with me there among them. No, certainly not that.

So the thing was to draw out the conversation till nightfall, making them forget what was buzzing in their heads. I asked one of them, "And your husband, what's he doing?"

"I have no husband, Lucas. Don't you remember I was your girl? I waited and waited for you and went on waiting. Then I heard you'd married. Now at my age nobody wants me."

"And what about me? It so happened I had all kinds of things to do that kept me very busy. But there's still time."

"But you're married, Lucas, and to none other than the daughter of the Holy Child Anacleto. Why do you start bothering me again? I've almost forgotten you by now."

"But I haven't. What do you say your name is?"

"Nieves . . . I'm still called Nieves. Nieves García. And don't make me cry, Lucas Lucatero. I only have to remember your promises, like honey, and I get mad."

"Nieves . . . Nieves. How could I possibly forget you? You're the kind one can't forget. You're so soft. I remember. I still feel you here in my arms. Gentle. Soft. The dress you used to come and see me in smelled of camphor. And you nestled so close to me. You pressed so close that you seemed to get right inside my bones. I remember."

"Don't go on saying those things, Lucas. I confessed yesterday, and you're bringing up evil thoughts and I'm beginning to sin all over again."

"I remember I kissed you between your thighs. And you said not there because it tickled. Have you still got dimples on your thighs?"

"You'd better be quiet, Lucas Lucatero. God won't forgive you for what you did to me. You'll pay dearly."

"Did I do something bad to you? Did I by any chance treat you badly?"

"I had to throw you over. And don't make me say this here in front of everybody. But so you'll know, I had to throw you over. You were like a piece of dried beef. And why should I love you, if your father was nothing but a tanner?"

"So that's what happened? I didn't know. Wouldn't you like a little more myrtle water? I won't take a moment preparing it. Just wait."

And again I went to the corral to cut some myrtle. And I stayed out there as long as I could, so the woman's bad temper should disappear.

When I came in again she'd gone.

"She went?"

"Yes, she went. You made her cry."

"I only wanted to talk to her, just to pass the time. Have you noticed how long the rains are in coming? In Amula they must have started already, haven't they?"

"Yes, the day before yesterday there was a shower."

"There's no doubt about it, it's a good climate there. There's plenty of rain and one lives well. Believe me, here there aren't even clouds. Is Rogaciano still the Municipal President?"

"Yes, he still is."

"He's a good man, Rogaciano."

"No, he's good for nothing."

"You may be right. And what about Edelmiro, is his chemist shop still closed down?"

"Edelmiro died. He did well to die, though I shouldn't say so. But he was another good-for-nothing. He was one of those that slandered the Child Anacleto. He accused him of abuses and witchcraft and deceptions. He gossiped all over the place. But people paid no attention and God punished him. He died of a bad temper like the Furies."

"Let's hope God sent him to Hell."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And that the devils are tiring themselves out throwing wood on the fire."

"The same with Lirio López, the judge, who took it upon himself to send the Holy Child to prison."

Now they were talking. I let them say all they wanted. As long as they didn't pay any heed to me everything was well. But suddenly it occurred to them to ask me:

"Do you want to come with us?"

"Where?"

"To Amula. That's what we came for. To take you back."

For a moment I felt like running out again to the corral. Escaping by the door that opened to the mountains and disappearing. Miserable old women!

"And what in the devil will I do in Amula?"

"We want you to be with us in our prayers. All the Child Anacleto's congregation have started a novena of prayers to ask that he should be canonised. You're his son-in-law and we need you to testify. The Father Curate has ordered us to bring him somebody who had close dealings with him and who knew him from a long way back, before he became famous for his miracles. And who better than you, who lived with him and can tell better than anybody the works of mercy he performed. That's why we need you, so you can be with us in our efforts."

To hell with the old women. They should have said so before.

"I can't go," I told them, "I haven't anyone to look after the house."

"Two girls will stay here to do that, we've arranged it. Besides there's your wife."

"I have no wife now."

"Your wife. The daughter of the Child Anacleto."

"She left me. I sent her away."

"But that's not possible, Lucas Lucatero. The poor thing must be suffering. And she was so good. And so young. And so pretty. Where did you send her, Lucas? We wouldn't mind if you'd sent her to the Convent of the Repentants."

"I didn't put her anywhere. I sent her away. And I'm sure she's not with the Repentants; she liked noise and amusement. She must be wandering about somewhere unbuttoning trousers."

"We don't believe you, Lucas, not in the very least. She's probably here, shut up in a room of this house, praying. You were always a great liar and talebearer. Lucas, remember the poor daughters of Hermelindo, who had to go as far as El Grullo because people whistled 'Las guilotas' every time they showed themselves in the street, and because you invented tales. One can't believe anything you say, Lucas Lucatero."

"Then it's needless for me to go to Amula."

"Confess first, and all will be well. When did you last confess?"

"Oh, not for about fifteen years. Since the Cristeros were going to shoot me. They put a gun at my back and made me kneel in front of the Curate and I even confessed things I hadn't done. So I confessed in advance then."

"If it weren't for the fact that you're the son-in-law of the Holy Child we wouldn't have come looking for you, and we wouldn't be asking you any favour. You've always been a bit of a devil, Lucas Lucatero."

"It wasn't for nothing I was Anacleto Morones' assistant. He was the Devil himself."

"Don't blaspheme."

"You didn't know him."

"We know he was a saint."

"But not that he was a vendor of saints."

"What are you saying, Lucas?"

"You don't know about that; but once he used to sell saints. At the fairs. In the church doors. And I carried the box. The two of us used to go together, in single file, from village to village. He in front, and I carrying the box with the offerings for San Pantaleón, San Ambrosio, and San Pascual, that used to weigh at least forty kilos."

"One day we met some pilgrims. Anacleto was kneeling on an antheap showing me how if you bite your tongue the ants don't sting. Then the pilgrims passed. They saw him. They stopped to look at the strange sight.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They asked: 'How can you be on the ant-heap and the ants don't sting?'

"Then he spread his arms like a cross and began to tell them he'd just returned from Rome, and that he brought a message from there and a splinter from the Holy Cross on which Christ was crucified."

"They bore him on their shoulders. On foot they carried him all the way to Amula. And there he stayed. People prostrated themselves in front of him and asked for miracles.

"That was the beginning. And I simply lived open-mouthed to see how he deceived the numbers of pilgrims that came to see him."

YOU'RE nothing but a liar and worse, a blasphemer. Who were you before you met him? A swineherd. And he made you rich. He gave you everything you've got. And you don't even trouble to speak well of him. You're disgraceful."

"As to that, I'm grateful to him for stopping my hunger, but that doesn't change the fact that he was the Devil incarnate. He's still that, wherever he may be."

"He's in Heaven. With the angels. That's where he is, even if it hurts you."

"I heard he was in prison."

"That was a long time ago. He escaped. He disappeared without a trace. Now he's in Heaven, body and soul. And from there he's sending us his blessings so that the Holy Child can intercede for us."

And the old women got down on their knees, and at every "Our Father" they kissed their scapularies, on which the portrait of Anacleto Morones was embroidered.

It was three in the afternoon.

I seized the opportunity to shut myself in the kitchen and eat some tacos and beans. When I came out only five women remained.

"What happened to the others?" I asked.

And Pancha, pulling at the four hairs she had on her lip, said, "They went away. They don't want to have anything to do with you."

"All the better. The fewer the guests the better the feast. Would you like some myrtle water?"

One of them, Filomena, who had been silent all the time and who was nicknamed The Skeleton, perched herself on one of my flower pots and, sticking her fingers into her mouth, threw up all the myrtle water she had been drinking, all mixed with bits of pork crackling and chile.

"I don't want even your myrtle water," she swore. "I don't want anything belonging to you."

And she put the egg I'd given her on the chair. "I don't even want your eggs! I'd better go."

Then there were only four.

"I'd like to throw up too," Pancha said. "But I'm holding it back. We have to take you to Amula somehow or other. You're the only person who can testify to the Holy Child's sainthood. He must soften your soul. We've already put his image in the church, and it wouldn't be right to throw it into the street on your account."

"Find someone else. I don't want to play this game."

"You were like his son. You inherited the fruits of his sainthood. So he should be perpetuated, he favoured you. He gave you his daughter."

"Yes, but when he gave her to me she was already perpetuating him."

"Good Lord, what are you saying, Lucas Lucatero?"

"That's how it was. She was at least four months pregnant when he gave her to me."

"But she had the odour of sanctity."

"She had the odour of pestilence. She showed her belly to anyone that stood in front of her, just so they'd see she was made of flesh and blood. She showed them her huge belly, livid with the swelling child inside her. And they laughed. They poked fun at her. She was shameless. That was the daughter of Anacleto Morones."

"Blasphemous. It's not for you to say such things. We'll give you a scapulary to take away your devils."

"She went off with one of them. Who said he loved her. He just said to her, 'I guess I'm the father of your child.' And she went off with him."

"It was the Holy Child's progeny. It was

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a girl. And you had her as a gift. You became master of great riches, born of Sainthood."

"Nonsense."

"What do you say?"

"Inside Anacleto Morones' daughter was Anacleto Morones' grandson."

"You're just inventing it to speak evil. You've always been a liar."

"Yes? And what about the rest? He left this part of the world without any virgins, because he was always asking for a young girl to watch over his dreams."

"He did that for the sake of purity. So as not to be soiled with sin. He wanted to surround himself with innocence so his soul should not be smirched."

"You think that just because he didn't ask for you."

"He did ask for me," said one of them they called Melquiades. "I watched over his dreams."

"And what happened?"

"Nothing. Only his miraculous hands clothed me in the hours when it grows cold. And I thanked him for the warmth of his body; but that was all."

"Because you were old. He liked them tender; so he could break them; hear them split open like peanuts."

"You're a blaspheming atheist, Lucas Lucatero. One of the worst."

Now it was the Orphan who spoke, the one that was always weeping. The eldest of all. She had tears in her eyes and her hands trembled:

"I'm an orphan and he took away my orphanhood. In him I met my father and mother once again. He spent the night caressing me so my sorrow would go."

And her tears flowed.

"You've nothing to cry about then," I said.

"It's that my parents have died. And they've left me alone. An orphan at an age when it is so difficult to find anyone to lean on. My one night of happiness was with the Child Anacleto, in his comforting arms. And now you speak badly of him."

"He was a saint."

"Good through and through."

"We were hoping you would carry on his work. You inherited it all."

"I inherited a sack of vices like a thousand Judases. A crazy old woman. Not as old as you, but quite crazy. It's a good thing she went. I myself opened the door for her."

"Heretic. You invent pure heresies."

Then there remained only two old women. The others had gone away one after the other, recoiling, making the sign of the cross, and promising to return with exorcisms.

"You're not going to deny that the Child Anacleto was a miracle," said the daughter of Anastasio. "That at least you can't deny."

"To have children isn't a miracle. That was his strong point."

"He cured my husband of syphilis."

"I didn't know you had a husband. Aren't you the daughter of the barber Anastasio? Tacho's daughter is a spinster as far as I know."

"I'm a spinster, but I have a husband. It's one thing to be a virgin and another to be a spinster. You know that. And I'm not a virgin but I'm a spinster."

"Going in for that at your age, Micaela."

"I had to. What was the use of living as a virgin. I'm a woman. And one's born to give what one is given."

"You use Anacleto Morones' own words."

"Yes, he suggested I should, so that my liver would get better. And I took a partner. This business of reaching the age of fifty untouched is a sin."

"Anacleto Morones told you that."

"Yes, he told me that. But we've come about something else; that you should come with us and certify that he was a saint."

"And why am I not one?"

"You haven't done any miracles. He cured my husband. That's proof to me. Perhaps you've cured somebody of syphilis?"

"No, I don't even know what it is."

"It's something like gangrene. He became livid, and his body was full of sores. He couldn't sleep any more. He said everything was red as if he were looking in at the gates of hell. And then he felt heat that made him jump with pain. Then we went to see the Child Anacleto and he cured him. He burned

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him with a burning reed and he anointed the wounds with his saliva, and in a second all his ills were gone. Tell me if that wasn't a miracle."

"He must have had measles. They cured me also with saliva when I was small."

"As I said before. You're a hopeless atheist."

"I have the comfort of knowing Anacleto Morones was worse."

"He treated you as his son. And still you dare . . . I'd better not listen to you any more. I'm going. Are you going to stay, Pancha?"

"I'll stay a bit longer. I'll have another try, alone."

"LISTEN, Pancha, now that everybody has gone you're going to stay and sleep with me, aren't you?"

"God forbid. What would people think? What I want to do is convince you."

"Well, let's convince each other. What will you lose by it after all? You're already old enough for nobody to bother with you, or favour you."

"But afterwards people talk. Then they'll think bad things."

"Let them think what they like. All the better."

"All right, I'll stay with you; but only till dawn. And only if you promise to come with me to Amula so I can say I passed the night imploring you. If not, what will I do?"

"All right. But first cut off those whiskers you have. I'll bring you the scissors."

"You're mocking me, Lucas Lucatero. You go through life looking for defects. Leave my whiskers in peace. Then they'll suspect nothing."

"All right, as you please."

When it grew dark she helped me put the hens to roost and pile up the stones I had thrown all over the corral, heaping them in the corner where they had been before.

And I never let on that Anacleto Morones was buried there. Nor that he had died the same day he escaped from prison and came here to claim his property.

He came and said, "Sell everything and give me the money, because I need it to go North. I'll write you from there and we'll both do business together again."

"Why don't you take your daughter?" I asked him. "Of all I possess she's the one thing that's no use to me. And you say she is yours. You even deceived me, with your tricks."

"You'll follow me when I've written to tell you where I've landed. There we'll settle accounts."

"It would be better if we settled them at once. So's to be quits."

"I'm not in a mood for joking just now," he told me. "Give me what's mine. How much money have you?"

"Some, but I'm not going to give it to you. I've exhausted my patience with your daughter's shamelessness. You can consider yourself well paid if I look after her."

He got mad. I paced the floor and told him to get out. . . .

"Rest in peace, Anacleto Morones!" I said when I buried him, and each time I made a trip to the river to bring back stones to heap over him: "You won't get out of here whatever tricks you try."

And now Pancha was helping me to pile the stones once more, and she never suspected that there underneath was Anacleto and that I was doing it from fear he might come out of the sepulchre and fight me again. He was so crafty I'd no doubt he'd find some way of coming back to life and escaping from where he was.

"Throw on more stones, Pancha. Pile them up in this corner. I don't like to see my corral scattered with stones."

Later when it was already dawn she said to me, "You're hopeless, Lucas Lucatero. You're not a bit loving. Do you know who was really loving?"

"Who?"

"The Child Anacleto. He really knew how to make love."

(*Translated by Irene Nicholson*)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Luigi Barzini Jr.

Island of Memories

Life on Formosa Today

IT IS hard at first to realise that Taipeh (or, if you will, Formosa) is a part of China. It seems to the arriving visitor that he is in one of the wretched industrial suburbs of Japan, like those around Tokyo, Yokohama, or Nagasaki—or even more like those that grew up around the new industrial centres of Manchuria during the Japanese occupation and colonisation. Little houses of wood or brick huddled against each other, and half-decrepit even before they have been finished; crumbling walls, barren gardens, shops crammed with cheap, tawdry wares from God knows where, made of calico, plastic, celluloid, or enamel; the same things one now sees in a North African *souk* or in the bazaars of Teheran. One loses oneself in a tangle of narrow, nameless little streets, amid hovels of all sizes, iron sheds, refuse, and poor people dressed very badly in the Western style. The whole is criss-crossed by very broad, straight streets along which the sparse traffic flows, mainly American cars carrying government officials or the military and economic experts of the many United States' missions. The rain falls incessantly, out of a dark and heavy sky. One lives in a gloomy, dispiriting twilight, dripping with dampness. The public buildings to which one goes for a permit, a visa, or simply to visit are all built in the style the Japanese used to consider European: red brick with grey stone cornices, copied probably from the ugly Wilhelminian structures of turn-of-the-century Germany. The residence of the former Japanese governor, which today serves the Chinese government for the reception of guests of honour, is the overblown mansion of a *nouveau riche* of 1908, a Munich beer baron or a Duesseldorf industrialist, without taste or character.

The Japanese conquered Formosa in 1894, when they were still considered a second-class people by all Europeans, and when they, on their own part, were making a heroic effort to learn all the arts of the West. In their relations with their subtropical colony, they played the master race, dressed like Westerners, erected ostentatious public buildings in the Western style, and wore the tropical helmets which were once the symbol of colonial domination, and which no white man in any corner of the world wears any longer (but which Chinese, Viet Minh, and Indonesian nationalists and Communists—like Mao-Tse-Tung, who wore his all during the twenty years of civil war—have since made their own). They wore shorts like the British in India, and treated the Chinese inhabitants of the island, who not only shared their race and culture but belonged to an older and higher civilisation, as "natives"

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and "coloured people." Fifty years of this domination naturally extinguished every visible trace of China, but it left no trace of the old, feudal Japan either—what it created was only this wretched world of the universal industrial suburb. There are no antique shops on Formosa, and no "curios" to buy.

Gradually, very gradually, one discovers the Chinese. About nine million people live on Formosa. They are Chinese from the province of Fukien who came here two, three, and four centuries ago. They speak their own dialect, which is incomprehensible to a Chinese from the North, so that when one takes a trip through Taipeh with a government interpreter, this interpreter must take along an interpreter of his own, in case he has to deal with a native Formosan who does not speak Mandarin, the Peking dialect which is China's Standard English. Beside the Chinese from Fukien, there are many who emigrated from Canton or the province of Canton—but only later, some only before the war, when the Japanese ruled the island. One recognises the Cantonese (mostly peasants and small merchants) as soon as one enters their houses. The others all have tablets on which the names of their dead, their ancestors, are inscribed, and before which they burn incense and set down bowls of rice, as is the duty of decent people all over China. But the Cantonese preserve their ancestors in a basket that hangs down from the roof, the symbol that they wish to return to their homes, that they are nowhere else so much at ease.

To these transplanted Chinese have now been added another two million refugees from the mainland who fled before the advancing Communists—men, women, and children, from every level of society. And these are really Chinese, as one knew them in China; now that the Japanese influence is gone, their effect on the remaining inhabitants of Formosa is strong, and is slowly altering the life of the island.

ONE finds oneself in China as soon as one enters a government office. (I mean a small, unimportant office, not one of the great ones where some personage is waiting to be interviewed; there all is silence, order, and emptiness, with only a few obsequious underlings hovering nearby). For the officials are, of course, Chinese from the mainland, transplanted—files and all—from Nanking or the provincial capitals. In the smaller offices people come and go through the open door in an unbroken stream, joking and laughing. The desks are lined up side by side, and that is how the officials work, chattering pleasantly. Unoccupied messengers circulate everywhere, carrying enamel teapots painted with frightful "Western" roses out of some horticultural catalogue, enormous pots of boiling water (these, too, decorated with painted flowers), cups full of steaming jasmine tea, and those tiny towels which the Chinese soak in boiling water and use everywhere, in trains, restaurants, and offices, to clean their hands and faces. One official is sunk in his work, another is calculating rapidly on an abacus, tossing the beads right and left and softly murmuring the numbers to himself. Here a calligrapher is drawing up a document, painting the little, complicated symbols one under the other and stopping every now and then to rub a little cake of ink on the damp stone of his inkstand. Old gentlemen in sparse little beards and long robes wait patiently while little groups chatter animatedly in a corner. The whole is a feverish, good-humoured disorder, an amiable chaos. It is easy to see that in such offices the work is done slowly, and by no means according to the rules of American efficiency (to tell the truth it is done slowly in America too, but there out of an excess of zeal and organisation). I do not know if one can win wars with such offices. But perhaps, in a certain sense, many things are done better, more thoughtfully.

THE Chinese ruling class of today—both on the mainland and on Formosa—is largely characterised by the foreign languages it has mastered and the kind of Western education it has received. An independent Chinese writer living in Hongkong recently divided these "returned students," from the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standpoint of their practical utility to Chinese life, into six groups.

First came the "Japanese." Chiang Kai-shek is one of them. These men have learnt modern techniques without losing their roots, without losing contact with the spiritual milieu into which they were born and in which they had to work.

Next came the "Russians," who found in the old Tsarist Empire and the Communist dictatorship an Asiatic and more or less comprehensible milieu. Chiang Ching-kuo, one of Chiang Kai-shek's sons, was educated in Russia and has a Russian wife (he met her while working in a mine in the Urals, to which he had been deported by Stalin). During the war he and his family were returned to China, and today he is the mysterious eminence who really controls the Formosan army and government, through a network of spies and political commissars which reaches into every government office and every unit of the army.

In the third place come the "Frenchmen," of whom Chou En-lai is a good example, who in Paris absorbed an abstract, philosophic, logically flexible point of view not too far removed from the traditional Confucian culture.

Fourth come the "Germans" (another of Chiang Kai-shek's sons was educated in German military academies and behaves like a Prussian officer) who brought with them a strictness and an unsentimental toughness otherwise foreign to the Chinese character, but very useful in military personalities.

Fifth come the "Englishmen" and, last of all, forming the immense majority, the "Americans."

"In America," I was told by a Chinese writer, who in his day also studied in the United States, "no one told me how things really were. We were taught nothing but noble feelings, perfect ideals, faultless political and administrative organisations. Then we were shown the result: skyscrapers, machines, prosperity, money, power. No one explained to us that America is not exactly what the Americans like to describe it as, that it is a complex and human country, and that its power and wealth have deep moral roots. So when we returned to China we laughed at everything that was old-fashioned and traditional, without understanding it, and flung ourselves on the new, on vitamins and fluorescent lights and automobiles—as if profit and the satisfaction of every wish were the keys to life."

The Chinese "Americans" meet in a squalid little club called the "Friends of China Club," where visiting journalists are also put up. They greet each other with handshakes, slap each other on the back, call each other "Tom," "Harry," and "Bill," play Canasta, read picture magazines, drink cocktails and sometimes dance, exactly like real Americans. They fill all the offices, working as contact men, diplomats, experts attached to the Chinese government or the various American missions, translating, interpreting, and handling all sorts of matters. They, too, however, like their models, the real Americans, are not the same as they were twenty years ago. The war, the defeat of the Kuomintang, and the loss of their country have provoked in many of them a profound examination of conscience. A few now are slowly turning back to Chinese tradition, wear Chinese clothing, and try to grasp the reality around them which slipped out of their hands in the years when they thought they had the scientific answers to all the questions of life and history. One of them told me that he had begun to study his country's classics in the long empty evenings, "exactly as if I had to pass the old Imperial examinations, as if I had to become a first-class Mandarin."

In the chaotic disorder in which hundreds of thousands of refugees streamed into the island during the civil war, there were, among the defeated generals, the inept politicians, the old warlords, and the young men who had yet despaired and wished to go on fighting, also professors, writers, historians, painters, calligraphers (the highest of all the arts in China, because it unites literature with perfect abstract form)—all jumbled together, those who followed the old paths and maintained the traditions of the three-thousand-year-old Empire and these younger

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men who wished to bring their homeland the discoveries of the West. In a sense, these men are as important as the military. Without them Formosa would be only a fortress held by mercenaries. With them, Formosa is still China.

LIU and I were students together in New York, many years ago. Now Liu's hair is grey. (My hair is grey too.) When we met again in China for the first time, in 1937, Liu was an important Kuomintang official, a "returned student from America," convinced, hard-working, and authoritative. Italy was fascist at the time, and the instructions my editors sent me were fascist. We were then already almost allies of the Japanese, who were engaged in conquering China in a brutal war of aggression. Nevertheless, Liu and I saw each other often in Shanghai, without discussing politics. Or at least I did not discuss politics. I did not like our almost-allies, and did not enjoy defending Italy's foreign policy. Liu talked. He explained to me that the new ideas he had learned in the university and brought back in his textbooks, the modern, scientific ideas, would sweep the fog of the past away from his country and renovate it from its very foundations. Oh, not all at once, for the weight of centuries could not be shaken off in a generation, and many habits, traditions, and superstitions remained to be uprooted. Nevertheless the old empire had been destroyed, a modern constitution had been adopted, and new bureaucratic organs were quickly clearing up all problems. In those days Liu spoke of the Communists with benevolence. He considered them democratics a little more advanced than himself—his own opinions were close to those of Edouard Benes, Léon Blum, and the Left wing of the New Deal.

When I found Liu again he was working in one of the many government offices of Formosa, as a liaison officer attached to one of the American missions. Today he is tired, thoughtful, unoccupied. He earns a tiny salary, is married to a schoolmistress, has two children, and lives in a single room of a Japanese working-class flat, like almost all the officials of the Chinese government, who must set an example of austerity after the years of carnival and corruption on the continent (Liu, however, to tell the truth, has always been honest and frugal).

He had no time to talk, and we decided to meet again that Saturday. We had lunch in the country, a long lunch that lasted into the afternoon while we talked of what had happened to both of us in the years between. We went to Peitou, a half-hour by car from Taipeh, on the slopes of the Straw Mountain, where there are many hot sulphur springs. We crossed the plain, through fields of rice, cultivated plant by plant like garden flowers, fields of curiously-shaped Chinese cabbages. The peasants in their cone-shaped palm-leaf hats were ploughing, walking behind water-buffalo with their backward-curved horns. Liu smiled as he watched. On Formosa, he told me, it was only in the country that he felt at home. The cities are, in fact, Japanese. One finds China again in the villages and the fields. The villages are still constructed in the old manner, and the little scenes of peasants at work, of children leading flocks of ducks to pasture along a canal, of running coolies carrying their loads on a bamboo pole balanced across their shoulders, of Chinese women transplanting the rice shoots, everything was exactly as if we were in Fukien.

During their fifty-year stay the Japanese built a number of inns at Peitou in which people "took the waters," and a great garden in which the municipal tastes of the 19th century were mingled with the most banal of Japanese traditions—little curved bridges, stone triumphal arches, tiny temples and gravel paths. Liu and I strolled and chatted. In the inns, he told me, as the custom is in Japan, young women give you your bath, soap you, wash you, rinse you, and massage you—women registered with the police and visited regularly by a doctor. "I have never been there, nor do I want to go," Liu said severely. "First of all, it is not a Chinese custom. Then, an official of the government should not let himself be seen in such pleasure spots. It is not appropriate." The government of Formosa is in mourning.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We strolled on. The garden is surrounded by the tropical forest, which looked down on us from the slopes of the mountain all around, a confusion of green branches and gigantic ferns, of tangled vines and great stately trees. Schoolchildren with Japanese-style visored caps were playing on the lawns. Liu spoke of Confucius. He had never spoken of Confucius in the years before, unless it was to deplore the attachment of the Chinese to his old maxims, which impeded progress. Liu now said that Confucius was profoundly rooted in the souls of his contemporaries—almost a second nature. "The Communists are trying to eradicate Confucius. I do not believe they will succeed. Confucius has dominated the thought and life of China not because he was a great creator of new ideas but because it was he who revealed the Chinese to themselves, who was more Chinese than anyone else. A Chinese who had never heard of him (which is impossible, but let us suppose it) would behave exactly as Confucius taught, without knowing it." Liu also said that the Communists were attempting, for example, to destroy the family ("they teach sons to abandon their fathers, they teach the young to denounce their parents"), which is the basis of Chinese social life. They have abolished the traditional virtues, overturned morality and discouraged ancestor worship as a superstition of the past. "But Confucius, who is the soul of his people, will defeat the Communists in the end. Not while you and I are alive, perhaps, but in the end."

Then he spoke to me of the old order. The last Chinese who had won first place in the highest examinations, those which were traditionally presided over by the Emperor himself, had died ten years ago. Today there are only a few survivors left, men who won minor posts, and they are all old men. But he told me how the old revolutionaries of the Kuomintang, the very men who in their youth had overthrown the Manchu dynasty, and who were born in another epoch, in the closing decades of the last century, were today, in their old age, in exile on Formosa, devoting themselves to the study of the classics and the philosophers, resuming the old usages. "Among us, almost no one is left of the traditional Chinese world except the men who destroyed it," Liu said.

In the restaurant (Liu, who was born in Peking, chose a North Chinese restaurant, where noodles were served instead of rice) there were long colloquies with the host to choose the dishes a foreigner would like best. The owner explained how his dishes were prepared (I understood only a fraction of what he was saying) and Liu listened doubtfully, shaking his head, or else nodding, saying yes, that would do. In this, too, I no longer recognised my old friend, who at one time would eat anything, preferably something Western, without paying it the least attention. Perhaps in speaking the dialect of his country, the "Mandarin" that no one on Formosa understands, and in recalling the dishes of his homeland, the specialities of Chi-Li and Shantung, Liu experienced a certain bitter satisfaction. And certainly, also, the years had passed, for him as well as for me, and perhaps this new pleasure in gastronomy, traditional among the old-fashioned Chinese of a certain age, like the praise of Confucius and of the imperial examinations, had no other explanation than the ripeness of Liu's age. But it was an age that corresponded with history; the failure of the democratic, Western revolution of his youth, the decay of the fine faith he had learned in America, the end of admiration for the European civilisation which had not cured the ills of China but rather aggravated them, and the necessity imposed on "Westernisers" like Liu to defend China and its spiritual patrimony, the same patrimony he had once despised, from the Communists.

On the way back we passed a funeral along a country road. The coffin, of fine, light, polished wood, rounded like a long barrel, was set on a trestle in a field. The provisions for the libations and the sacrifices were set out on long tables. The relatives of the dead man were dressed in clothes of the antique style, made of rough cotton cloth, clothes they rented for the occasion and wore over their own everyday clothing like pinafores.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some of them were wearing red symbols on their hoods. "The dead man was very old," Liu said. "Red is the symbol of joy. The death of an old man is celebrated with festivities, because he goes straight to paradise." Off to one side, some relatives were engaged in burning imitation money, with signs that read, "10,000 dollars" in gold. The banknotes were for the dead man's use in the next world. Rice wine was poured on the fire, according to custom. Liu said that this was a poor country funeral of people who had not lived in China for half a century. I answered that I remembered the great funerals of Peking very well, the Buddhist priests dressed in vari-coloured silk and wool, and the life-size carriages, the horses, and the automobiles made of sticks and paper which were burned so that the dead man would be accompanied to heaven by a cortège of honour. A horrible din of music assailed us; peasants were blowing madly on shrill-sounding pipes, striking metal plates against each other, and banging bells, more to frighten the evil spirits than to make music. Liu lifted his voice to make himself heard, and asked me, with tears in his eyes, "Do you remember, at Peking? They burned cardboard servants too, marvellous servants who must have made a wonderful retinue for the dead man."

IT IS as if the first revolutionaries of France, the members of the National Assembly, those who condemned the king to death, proclaimed the rights of man, and founded the Republic, had all ended up in Coblenz, side by side with members of the old régime. It is as if the first heroes of the Risorgimento had taken refuge on Capri or Elba, hunted from the mainland and forced to live with the last of the Naples Bourbons. On Formosa, if you have a mind to, you can find almost all the great personalities of Chinese history over the last few decades, living obscurely on their pensions, writing their memoirs, and interminably discussing decisions made twenty or thirty years ago and forgotten now by everyone else. Prince Pu, the last of the House of Manchu, lives an obscure and penurious life as a professor of painting and calligraphy. He would probably be the Emperor, if there were an Emperor.

Chang Hsueh-liang, the "Young Marshal," lives under house arrest in his home, a handsome villa in the suburbs. No one is permitted to see him. His name is not in the telephone directory and he is not listed in the official "China Handbook," in which one can find almost everyone else. Newspaper readers may remember that he was the mysterious protagonist of obscure events in the past. He is the son of Chang Tso-lin, the "Old Marshal," an Imperial general who became a warlord in his day, the governor and master of Manchuria. From his father, Chang inherited his feudal domain, a powerful army, and the knack of preserving his independence by playing on the rivalries among Japan, China, and Russia. When the Japanese occupied Manchuria in 1931 they met no resistance. The Young Marshal had slipped over the Great Wall in time, taking with him his men, his arms, his trunks, and his treasury. There was talk of treason, but it was impossible to prove anything against a man who possessed as his personal property a considerable number of well-armed divisions. Later he was the protagonist of another curious affair. He invited Chiang Kai-shek to Sianfu, his capital, and held him prisoner there, trying to force him into agreement with the Communists in the common struggle against the Japanese. At least, that is what people say. They tell how Chou En-lai shuttled back and forth between Sianfu and Mao Tse-tung. But no one knows the exact truth. Today they say Chang is a serious man in his fifties who is studying the great problems of his country.

In a little castle built of grey stone, on the crest of a mountain, lives the oldest of the revolutionaries of 1911, Yen Hsi-shan. He is more than seventy now. He studied military science in Japan and after the proclamation of the republic in 1912 was made the governor of Shansi by Sun Yat-sen. Later, in 1927, he was the commander of the Third Army group when Chiang Kai-shek destroyed the Communists for the first time, then commander of the garrisons of Peking

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Tientsin, Minister of the Interior in 1928, commander of the Second Zone during the war, governor of Shansi once again, and president of the Council of Ministers as well as Minister of Defence between 1949 and 1950, up to the moment of the final defeat. Shansi was his personal dominion. When he had to leave the capital, Tayuanfu, to assume the post of Prime Minister, he made the faithful supporters he left behind him promise that they would never yield the province to the Communists while they were still alive. They kept their word. They fought to the last, and at the end, gathered around their chiefs before the arrival of the enemy, isolated, hopeless, and without supplies, committed suicide. There were 500 of them. Yen Hsi-shan had a temple built to their memory on Formosa, where their names are all inscribed on slabs of marble, and where sticks of incense are kept burning perpetually. He no longer busies himself with politics. He, too, studies Confucius and the classics, writes memoirs, poetry, historical and political essays, and interminably debates the problem: How could the Communists, who represent an absurd philosophy contrary to the Chinese national character, have made themselves the masters of the whole country? It is a question which can easily keep him occupied for the rest of his days.

I WENT to visit him. It was pouring. One of his secretaries came to fetch me, a man full of ceremony; I was accompanied by my interpreter. We reached the eagle's nest of the glorious old man in about an hour. From there a vast panorama was spread out before us, of mountains spectral in the rain, of distant peaks emerging from the soft mist, of dark valleys blending into obscurity, of distant plains glimpsed now and then through the rents in the clouds. It was the ideal of Chinese beauty, in which there should always be something of the vague, the uncertain, the irregular (the Chinese spend hours contemplating the markings on a rock, the veins of a leaf, the shape of clouds, the flight of birds). We were met by four or five deferential young men—secretaries, relatives, and courtiers—who ushered us into the general's study. The castle is a little stone house, without pretensions, built in the Occidental style. At home one would have thought it a signal station or a military post. All around it are sheds, huts, and hovels. From their half-open doors, curious women and children peered out at the visitors; one caught glimpses of unmade beds. Everywhere there were broken boxes, empty bottles, tins, scratching chickens, rain-soaked papers, all in disorder, the disorder dear to the Chinese which one encounters everywhere, and which undoubtedly must have ruled in the Forbidden City in Peking, in the imperial days.

Yen Hsi-shan lives in a single small room heated by a large oil-stove. The odour of the oil mingled with his old-man's smell, stale and animal-like. He was pale, with steel-rimmed glasses, an unshaven beard, and an artificial denture through which his words came out with a hiss. When one thinks of the importance of slight nuances in the pronunciation of Chinese, one can imagine the difficulty of this conversation. His intimates listened to the words of the venerable sage, then repeated and explained them to my interpreter, who in turn translated them for me. When a doubt arose, when it was not wholly clear exactly what the monosyllable in question was, everyone began to write with his finger in the air, or on the palm of his hand. Misunderstandings can arise over pronunciation, but the characters are the same for all, and there is only one for each meaning. In a corner, a silent, patient scribe wrote down everything his master said. The conversation lasted several hours, into the evening, a conversation held in Chinese of which, from time to time, I was allowed to understand fragments.

"I had many conversations with Communists," the old general said, "all during those years from 1920 on. I know them all, except Mao Tse. I always asked them the same question. Do you believe, I said, that Communism can work in China? And I proved easily that it was impossible, not because Communism was a bad theory, but because theoretically it was too good, too ad-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vanced for human nature, for man as he is in reality. It is an ideal of perfection that the normal person can never attain. And so the Communists must compel him, with tyranny, police, brutality, and death, without ever attaining their ideals. When I was governor of Shansi, in 1931, I once brought seventeen professors together in my home. Many of them were Communist sympathisers. I kept them there, in discussion, for twenty-nine days, while the scribes took down their words. They spoke more than a hundred thousand of them. In the end they were all agreed. Communism could not exist in China.

"Later, between 1937 and 1945, I commanded the Eighteenth Army Corps, which included all the Communist forces, in the war against the Japanese. (I had two enemies to fight, the Japanese and the Communists.) I often talked with Chou En-lai and with Chu Teh, proving to them that it was wasted effort to try to create a Communist régime in China, because mankind was not up to their ideals. Chou En-lai admitted that I was right, but he told me one day that he did not care whether it would take thirty, fifty, or a hundred years to build Communism in China, since we would all be dead, and would never see the final result."

My objection that, nevertheless, the Communists had won in China, was lost among the translations of the interpreters. Yen Hsi-shan went on to say that he had gathered his criticisms of the Marxist system into a book. It was called *The Unit of Payment in Kind and the Distribution of Income According to Labour*. (The translating of the title took a quarter of an hour.) It was a devastating critique. The Russian ambassador became interested in it, had a translation made and sent it to Moscow. In it, Yen proved that Communism could not endure for two reasons. First, because it was contrary to human nature. And secondly, because it was based on an egoistic and materialist philosophy, both heartless and conscienceless, which history would reject.

The scribe wrote, the courtiers hung on his lips, the hours passed, evening came. . . .

On Any Pair Of Great Lovers

Now they nothing feel
Who felt the earth
And thought the world
Was but the room around their bed.
Now they are words
Who language scorned
And spoke their bodies
Limb by limb and deed by deed.
Now they are wind
Whose names lived
But between each other's lips,
And put to bed again in books,
In truth are dead.

Roy Ashwell

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arthur Koestler

An Essay on Snobbery

AN EARNEST essay on snobbery is an undertaking almost as humourless as an earnest essay on humour—which I have also done. But I have been fascinated by the subject for many years (particularly since I have settled in England) and I gradually became convinced that snobbery is not merely a silly human weakness but something basic in the mentality of modern man—a symptom which reflects the general sickness, the dislocation of social and cultural values in contemporary civilisation.

I shall talk of cultural snobbery first, of social snobbery later.

I

IN THE days before Hitler, the licentious days of the Weimar Republic, I knew in Berlin a young woman who worked for a left-wing publishing firm. Mary B. was attractive, clever, and notoriously promiscuous. There was a standing joke about her which asserted that she had slept with every author of the firm whose books sold more than 20,000 copies; age and sex did not matter. As I had not yet written a book, I had obviously no chances with Mary, but we were friends, and one day I asked her whether the rumour was true. Mary said quite seriously that on the whole it was, and then explained the reason for what appeared to be an extreme case of literary snobbery.

She came from a very strict Lutheran family of the East-Prussian gentry. She had run away from home at twenty "to lead her own life." She had been attracted by a number of young men in succession, but found erotic pleasure frustrated by her intense awareness of sin. At twenty-one she was seduced by a famous writer who physically did not attract her at all, and to her surprise experienced the sensations which on previous occasions had eluded her, without any feeling of guilt. This incident was the beginning of her "20,000-and-over" complex.

The explanation of it she found herself. It took the form of an imaginary dialogue with her stern father:

". . . But you see, Papa, having an affair with a famous man is not frivolous—it is like going to bed with History. Who would blame Marie Walewska for surrendering to Napoleon? Everything you do with a famous man is redeemed from its sinfulness by becoming a Historical Anecdote."

Mary perished as a victim of her complex. She became the mistress of Michael Kolzov, the once famous *Pravda* correspondent, an unattractive and insignificant-looking little man who was read not only by 20,000 but by two million people. During the great Russian purge of 1938, Kolzov vanished, and Mary vanished with him. I shall come back to her later on, for I believe that her case will help to illuminate some of the more obscure aspects of the psychology of snobbery.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II

A FRIEND of mine, whom I shall call Brenda, was given for her birthday by one of her admirers a Picasso line-drawing in a simple modern frame. It was an admirable and typical sample of Picasso's "classical" period: a Greek youth carrying a girl in his arms, the contours of the two figures mixed up and partly indistinguishable like those of Siamese twins with shared limbs, yet adding up to a charming and harmonious total effect. It looked like a lithograph, but it bore no serial number, so Brenda took it to be a reproduction and hung it, somewhat disappointed with the gift, in her staircase. On my next visit, several weeks later, it was hanging over her drawing-room mantelpiece. "I see the Picasso reproduction has been promoted," I said. "*Reproduction!*", she cried indignantly. "It turned out it's an *original*! Isn't it lovely? Look at that line along the girl's hip. . . ." etcetera.

As a matter of fact, it *was* an original—a shyly understated gift of the mumbling and devoted admirer. But as it was a line-drawing consisting of nothing but black contour on white paper, it needed an expert, or at least a good magnifying lens, to decide whether it was an original, a lithograph, or a reproduction. Neither Brenda nor any of her visitors could tell the difference. But they took it for granted, as we all do, that an original deserves a proud display whereas a reproduction belongs, at best, to the staircase.

I shall now try to analyse, in a pedantic way, the reason for this apparently so natural attitude. The original is, of course, many times more expensive than a reproduction; but we would indignantly reject the idea of displaying a picture simply because it is expensive; we pretend to be guided in these matters by purely æsthetic considerations. Next, one might surmise that our contempt for reproductions originates in the poor quality, and even poorer choice of subjects, of the Victorian print. But modern printing techniques have achieved miracles, and some Ganymede reproductions of aquarelles are almost indistinguishable from the original. In the extreme case of the line-drawing, we have complete æsthetic equivalence between original and reproduction.

And yet there is something revolting in this equivalence. It even takes a certain courage to admit to oneself that the æsthetic effect of a copy might be indistinguishable from that of the original. We live in an age of stereotyped mass-production; and after mass-produced furniture, mass-produced and prefabricated houses, the idea of mass-produced Piero de la Francescas is indeed revolting. But we have no similar objection to mass-produced gramophone records. Nor to mass-produced books; and yet they too fall into the category of "reproductions." Why then do you prefer, according to your income, a more or less second-rate original picture on the wall to a first-rate reproduction of a masterpiece? Would you rather read a mediocre young poet in manuscript than Shakespeare in a paper-cover edition?

Our argument seems to have become bogged down. Let us find out what Brenda herself has to say to explain her behaviour, in a dialogue with the writer:

B: "I simply can't understand what all this fuss and talk is about. But *of course* my attitude to the drawing has changed since I know that Picasso himself did it. That's nothing to do with snobbery—it's just that I wasn't told before."

K: "Your attitude has changed—but has that thing on the wall changed?"

B: "Of course it hasn't, but now I *see* it differently!"

K: "I would like to understand what it is that determines your attitude to a picture in general."

B: "Its quality, of course."

K: "And what determines its quality?"

B: "Oh, don't be such a pedant. Colour, composition, balance, harmony, power, what have you."

K: "So, in looking at a picture, you are guided by purely æsthetic value-judgements, depending on the qualities you mentioned?"

B: "Of course I am."

K: "Now as that picture hasn't changed, and its qualities haven't changed, how can your attitude have changed?"

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

B: "But I have told you before, you idiot. Of course my attitude to it is now different, since I know it isn't one reproduction in a million, but done by Picasso himself. Can't you see?"

K: "No, I can't see; you are contradicting yourself. The rarity of the object, and your knowledge of the manner in which it came into being, do not alter the qualities of that object, and accordingly should not alter your judgement of it, if it were really based on purely æsthetic criteria—as you believe it to be. But it isn't. Your judgement is not based on what you *see*, but on a purely accidental bit of information, which might be right or wrong and is entirely extraneous to the issue."

B: "Wrong? How *dare* you insinuate that my Picasso isn't an original? And how *dare* you say that the question whether he drew it himself is extraneous to the issue?"

And so it will go on indefinitely. Yet Brenda is not stupid; she is merely confused in believing that her attitude to an object of art is determined by purely æsthetic considerations, whereas in fact it is decisively influenced by factors of a quite different order. She is unable to see her picture isolated from the context of her knowledge of its origin; and if she were to learn that it is after all a reproduction, her attitude would again change according to the changed context. Moreover, she is genuinely indignant at the suggestion that the question of its origin has nothing to do with æsthetic value as such. For, in our minds, the question of origin, authorship, or authenticity, *though in itself extraneous to æsthetic value*, is so intimately and indistinguishably fused with our attitude to the object, that we find it well-nigh impossible to isolate the two. Thus, Brenda unconsciously projects one scale of values on to a system of quite different values.

Is Brenda, then, a snob? It depends on the definition of snobbery, at which we hope to arrive at the end. But as a working hypothesis, I would like to suggest that this process of unconsciously applying to any given field a judgement derived from an alien system of values, constitutes the essence of the phenomenon of snobbery. By these standards Brenda would *not* be a snob if she had said: "The reproduction in this case is just as beautiful as the original. But one gives me a greater thrill than the other for reasons which have nothing to do with beauty." She is an unconscious snob because she is unable to distinguish between the two elements of her experience, unable to name the extraneous cause of her biassed æsthetic judgement, or to see that it *is* biassed.

I am aware of pedantically labouring an apparently obvious point. But it will become at once less obvious if we turn to a different yet related problem.

III

In 1948, a German art restorer named Dietrich Fey, engaged in reconstruction work on Luebeck's ancient St. Marien Church, stated that his workmen had discovered traces of old Gothic wall-painting dating back to the 13th century, under a coating of chalk on the church walls. The restoration of the paintings was entrusted to Fey's assistant, Lothar Malskat, who finished the job two years later. In 1950, Chancellor Adenauer presided over the ceremonies marking the completion of the restoration work, in the presence of art experts from all parts of Europe. Their unanimous opinion, voiced by Chancellor Adenauer, was that the twenty-one 13th century Gothic saints on the church walls were "a valuable treasure and a fabulous discovery of lost masterpieces."

None of the experts on that, or any later occasion, expressed doubt as to the authenticity of the frescoes. It was Herr Malskat himself who, two years later, disclosed the fraud. He presented himself on his own initiative at Luebeck Police headquarters, where he stated that the frescoes were entirely his own work, undertaken by order from his boss, Herr Fey; and he asked to be tried for forgery. The leading German art experts, however, stuck to their opinion: the frescoes, they said, were no doubt genüine, and Herr Malskat was merely seeking cheap publicity. An official Board of Investigation was

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appointed which came to the conclusion that the restoration of the wall paintings was a hoax—but only after Herr Malskat had confessed that he had also manufactured hundreds of Rembrandts, Watteaus, Toulouse-Lautrecs, Picassos, Henri Rousseaus, Corots, Chagalls, Vlamincks, and other masters, and sold them as originals—some of which were actually found by the police in Herr Fey's house. Without these *corpus delicti*, it is doubtful whether the German experts would ever have admitted having been fooled.

My point is not the fallibility of the experts. Herr Malskat's exploit is merely the most recent of a number of similar successful hoaxes and forgeries—of which the most fabulous were probably van Megeeren's false Vermeers. The disturbing question which they raise is: are the Luebeck saints less beautiful, and have they ceased to be "a valuable treasure of masterpieces," simply because they were painted by Herr Malskat and not by somebody else? And furthermore, if van Megeeren can paint Vermeers as good as Vermeer himself, why should they be taken off the walls of the Dutch and other National Galleries? If even the experts were unable to detect the difference, then surely the false Vermeers must provide as much æsthetic pleasure to the common run of museum visitors as the authentic ones. All the curators would have to do is to change the name on the catalogue from Vermeer to van Megeeren.

There are several answers to this line of argument, but before going into them I want to continue in the part of *advocatus diaboli* by considering an example of a forgery in a different field: Macpherson's "Ossian." The case is so notorious that the facts need only be briefly mentioned. James Macpherson (1736–96), a Scottish poet and adventurer, alleged that in the course of his wanderings in the Highlands he had discovered some ancient Gaelic manuscripts. Enthusiastic Scottish *littérateurs* put up a subscription to enable Macpherson to pursue his researches, and in 1761 he published *Fingal, an ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, together with several other poems composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal.* (Ossian is the legendary 3rd century hero and bard of Celtic literature.) *Fingal* was soon followed by the publication of a still larger Ossianic epic called *Temora*, and this by a collected edition, *The Works of Ossian*. The authenticity of Macpherson's text was at once questioned in England, particularly by Dr. Johnson (whom Macpherson answered by sending him a challenge to a duel), and to his death Macpherson refused, under various unconvincing pretexts, to publish his alleged Gaelic originals. By the turn of the century the controversy was settled, and it was established that, while Macpherson had used fragments of ancient Celtic lore, most of the "Ossianic texts" were of his own making.

Yet here again the question arises whether the poetic quality of the work itself is altered by the fact that it was written not by Ossian, the son of Fingal, but by James Macpherson? The "Ossianic" texts were translated into many languages, and had a considerable influence on the literature and cultural climate of Europe in the late 18th and early 19th century. This is how the *Encyclopædia Britannica* sums up its evaluation of Macpherson:

> The varied sources of his work and its worthlessness as a transcript of actual Celtic poems do not alter the fact that he produced a work of art which . . . did more than any single work to bring about the romantic movement in European, and especially in German, literature. . . . Herder and Goethe . . . were among its profound admirers.

These examples could be continued indefinitely. Antique furniture, Roman statuary, Greek tanagra figures, and Italian madonnas are being forged, copied, counterfeited all the time, and the value we set on them is not determined by æsthetic appreciation and pleasure to the eye, but by the precarious and often uncertain judgement of experts. A mediocre but authenticated picture by a known master is held in higher esteem than an artistically superior work of his unknown pupil or "school"—not only by art dealers guided by "investment," but by all of us, including this writer. Are we, then, all

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

snobs to whom a signature, an expert testimonial, or the postmark of a given period is more important than the intrinsic beauty of the object itself? And what about the contested works of Shakespeare and Johann Sebastian Bach? Are their dramatic and poetic and harmonic qualities dependent on the endless technical controversy between specialists and scholars?

IV

I NOW propose to present the case for the defence. It can be summed up in a single sentence: Our appraisal of any work of literature and art is never a unitary act, but the result of two independent and simultaneous processes which tend to distort each other.

When we look at an Egyptian fresco, we do not enjoy the painting at its face value, but by means of an unconscious re-attunement of the mind to the values of the period. We know, for instance, that the Egyptians had not discovered the technique of perspective in depth. We know that on certain Egyptian murals the size of the figures is determined by their relative social rank. Similarly, we look at every picture through a double frame: the solid frame which isolates it from its surroundings and creates for it a hole in space, as it were; and the unconscious frame of reference in our minds which creates for it a hole in time and locates it in its period and cultural climate. Every time we think that we are making a purely æsthetic judgement based on pure sensory perception, we are in fact judging relative to this second frame, or context, or mental field.

Any work of art, or literature, or music, can only be appreciated against the background of its period, and that is what we unconsciously do: when we naïvely believe that we are applying absolute criteria, we are in fact applying relative ones. When we contemplate the false Vermeer the first time believing it to be authentic, and the second time knowing that it is a fake, our æsthetic experience will indeed completely change, though the picture has remained the same. For it is now seen in a different frame of reference and therefore, in fact, differently. The same considerations apply to the perpetrator of the fake. He may be able to imitate the technique of the 18th century Flemish School, but he could not spontaneously start painting like Vermeer—because his visual organisation is different, his perception of reality is different, and because he cannot, except by an artificial effort, erase from his mind the accumulated experience of everything that happened in painting since Vermeer. And if, by a *tour de force*, a contemporary artist succeeded in reconditioning his own vision to that of the Flemish 18th century or the Italian Quatrocento, he would have to use mass-hypnosis to recondition the vision of his customers in a similar manner.

We can add to our knowledge and experience, but we cannot subtract from it. When Picasso decides to disregard the laws of perspective, that means that he has passed through and beyond a certain technique—unlike the Egyptian painter, who has never acquired it. Evolution is an irreversible process; the culture of a period might apparently point into the same direction as an earlier one, but it does so from a different turn of the spiral. A modern primitive is different from a primitive primitive; contemporary classicism is different from any classical classicism; only the mentally insane are able to amputate part of their past.

And yet when we contemplate works of the past, we must perform just such a process of mental subtraction, by attuning our minds to the climate and experience of the period. In order to appreciate them, we must enter into their spirit by forgetting our modern experience and all that we have learnt since that homeric epic or Byzantine mosaic was created. We must descend into the past, making our mind a blank; and as we do so, we unconsciously condescend. We close our eyes to crudities of technique, naïveties of perception, prevailing superstitions, limitations of knowledge, factual errors. We make allowances. A little honest introspection will always reveal the element of condescension contained in our admiration for the classics; and part of our enjoyment when listening to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the voices of the past is derived from this half-consciously patronising attitude—"how clever of them to know that at their age." We feel that we have descended a turn of the spiral; we are looking up in awe and wonder at Dante's dreadful Paradise, but at the same time we seem to be bending down, with a tender, antiquarian stoop.

This legitimate kind of æsthetic double-think degenerates into snobbery at the point where the frame of reference becomes more important than the picture, when the thrill derived from the gesture of bending over the past dominates the æsthetic experience. The result is a widespread confusion of critical judgement—overestimation of the dead and belittlement of the living, indiscriminate reverence for anything that is "classical," "antique," "primitive," or simply old. In its extreme form this tendency prompts people to have their wall-brackets and picture frames artificially dirtied to lend them the patina of age; so let us call it the "patina-snobbery."

The process that leads to these distortions of judgement is basically the same as outlined before: the projection of one scale of values to a psychologically related but objectively alien field of experience. The essence of snobbery is to assess value according to a wrong type of scale; the snob is always trying to measure beauty with a thermometer or weight with a clock.

V

THE thirteen-year-old daughter of a friend was recently taken to the Greenwich Museum. When she was asked which was the most beautiful thing she had seen in the Museum, she said unhesitatingly: "Nelson's shirt." When asked what was so beautiful about it, she explained: "That shirt with the blood on it was jolly nice. Fancy real blood on a real shirt, which belonged to somebody really historic!"

The child's thrill is obviously derived from the same source as the magic that emanates from Napoleon's inkpot, the lock of hair on the Egyptian mummy's head, the relic of the saint carried in annual procession, the strand of the rope by which a famous murderer was hanged, and from Tolstoy's laundry bill. In the mentality of primitive man an object which had been in contact with a person is not merely a souvenir: it becomes magically imbued with the substance of that person, and in turn magically emanates something of that substance. "There is, I am sure, for most of us, a special pleasure in sinking your teeth into a peach produced on the estate of an earl who is related to the Royal Family," a columnist wrote recently in the *Daily Express*.

Primitive magic survives in the subconscious; the strand of hair carried in the locket, grandmother's wedding dress, the faded fan of the first ball, the regimental badge, all have a half-conscious fetish character. The bobby-soxers who tear shreds off the crooner's garb are the vulgarised 20th century version of the worshippers cherishing a splinter from a saint's bone. The value that we set on original manuscripts, on "signed" pieces of furniture, on Dickens' quill and Galileo's telescope, are more dignified manifestations of the same unconscious tendency. It is as the child said, "jolly nice" to behold a fragment of a marble by Praxiteles—even if it is battered out of human shape, with a leper's nose and broken ears. The contact with the Master's hand has imbued it with a magic quality which has lingered on and radiates at us, conveying the same thrill as "the real blood on Nelson's real shirt."

The change in our attitude—and in the art dealer's price—when it is learnt that a cracked and blackened piece of canvas is an "authenticated" work by X has nothing to do with beauty, æsthetics, or what have you—it is the working of sympathetic magic in us. The inordinate importance that we attribute to the original, the authenticated, in those borderline cases where only the expert could tell the difference, is a derivative from primitive fetishism. And as every honest art dealer will admit, these borderline cases are so frequent as to be almost the rule. Moreover, it was a general practice in the past for the master to let his pupils assist in the execution of large undertakings. To the majority of mortals, even those with a discerning taste,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the difference between an "authenticated" masterpiece, an "attribution," and a "from-the-school-of" is in most cases not discernible. The brutal truth is that within most periods and schools with a firmly established and conventionalised style, the difference in quality between the competent practitioners of that style is only relevant to those who specialise in that epoch. It is not the eye that guides the average museum visitor, but the magic of names and the magic of age. The bedevilment of æsthetic experience by unconscious fetish worship and patina snobbery is so general that it has become a major factor in our attitude to the art of past epochs. It is an attitude as remote from spontaneous appreciation as the "Emperor's Clothes" approach to hyper-modern forms of art. The last-mentioned aberration is too obvious to require discussing; and I shall now turn from cultural to social snobbery.

VI

Prince Charles still has all his teeth. A rumour that he has lost one, set the crowds straining to see last night. DAILY SKETCH, October 1954.

"PENDS-TOI, brave Crillon; nous avons combattu à Arques et tu n'y étais pas." I have forgotten what Crillon answered to Henry IV, but I am sure that he must have cursed himself for the rest of his life for having missed the historic opportunity. What I propose to call "the Crillon complex" may be loosely defined as the urge to participate in, or at least be present at, the making of History. At a first glance this may seem a peculiarity shared only by a few, the ambitious and the envious; but I believe that this urge is deeper than apparent, and that it affects a large number of people in varying degrees. Mary B. was an extreme example—in her case the Crillon complex took the form of wanting "to sleep with History." A less extreme form is the widespread desire to "meet" famous or "historic" personalities. Superficially it seems to be motivated by gross social vanity, by the urge to boast "I have met the famous X." There may also be present a genuine curiosity to find out what X looks like "in real life." But the millions who used to flock to the White House to shake the President's hand, before that custom was abolished, were driven not so much by vanity or curiosity as by the desire to "shake hands with history." The crowds who go to any length of trouble to catch a glimpse of a coronation, or a visiting statesman, or the eruption of a volcano, are at least partly motivated by the desire to "have been present," to "witness history in the making," to participate, in whatever passive or remote manner, in the world-shaping events of one's time. The reverse of this urge is the fear of "missing something," of failing to exploit to the full the chance of being a contemporary, a witness of one's time.

The Crillon complex produces a rather touching variety of social snobs: the Peeping Toms of history, obsessed by the desire to "have been present," and to meet important people who, in one field or another, influence the destinies of their time. Boswell was perhaps the most outstanding historic snob, the prototype of all celebrity hunters and autograph collectors, of the people who will camp all night in the streets to catch a passing glimpse at some famous personality or event.

Social life is permeated with the Crillon complex, and our choice of company is profoundly influenced by it. We have a preference for people with some achievement to their credit which, however remote from our own interests, makes them "important" in their field, for people who are likely to leave their imprint on our time. Whether they leave their imprint as politicians, Chinese scholars, or collectors of snuff-boxes does not matter; nor do their human qualities. The value of people on the social market is determined not by what they are but what they represent. To be oneself is not enough; one must be "somebody."

The phenomenon is so general that a society free from the germ of snobbery is difficult to imagine. In such an aseptic society, human beings would be judged purely by their intrinsic value and not by rank, fame, wealth, or professional achievement. But at

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

once the question arises: what exactly do we mean by intrinsic value? Courage or humility, wit, or warmth, or saintliness? We cannot arrive at value judgements without a frame of reference; appraisals can only be made by selecting a specific yardstick. We cannot even ask whether the yardstick is "appropriate" as such. A boxing fan is not a snob although he sets a higher value on Joe Louis than on T. S. Eliot; nor is the music enthusiast to whom Yehudi Menuhin is more important than Sir Winston Churchill. Yet the social hostess with the musicality of a cow, who raves about Yehudi and longs to have him for a cocktail party, is a snob, because she pretends to measure value by one quality whereas in fact she measures it by another.

Under exceptional circumstances, a social group may acquire a "monolithic" hierarchy of values, and such groups are relatively free from snobbery, because there is no other scale of values to interfere with judgement. At the frontline, or on a dangerous expedition, a combination of courage, optimism, skill, and comradeliness is the supreme value which temporarily excludes all other yardsticks, and lifts the individual out of his normal context of rank, social position, etc. "Closed" societies such as prison camps, sanatoria, monasteries, also tend to develop a monolithic system of values, though here the combination of qualities required is a different one. Under such conditions of extreme pressure, members of the closed group seem to judge each other purely by "intrinsic value" or "human quality" stripped from all considerations which normally bias judgement.

Under normal conditions, however, human society is a chaos of mutually exclusive systems of value which constantly intersect, overlap, and clash. I have tried to show how, in the appreciation of art, which we believe to be based on purely æsthetic criteria, alien systems interfere and turn us into cultural snobs. The tendencies which interfere with our appreciation of human qualities and turn us into social snobs are of a more obvious nature; the psychological roots of the worship of title, power, wealth, are easily traced. The difficulty here is to reach agreement on the question: which are the human qualities on which we think that our social preference *should* be based?

The answer can only be tentative and vague; yet by and large our confessed inclination would be to choose as friends people whose company we find both stimulating and relaxing; with whom we share certain tastes and interests, a cultural or social background; who are loyal and understanding and remain attractive human beings when stripped of all their distinction of rank or profession. In fact, however, the choice of the company we keep is guided by all these considerations to a lesser extent than we care to admit. The catch is in the purely fictitious assumption that we can ever strip a person from his background or "frame."

Let me take an obvious—and depressingly typical—example. At a crowded literary cocktail party I was introduced to a dull, middle-aged woman, who paid me some dull compliment about a book. As I hadn't been able to catch her name, I asked her whether she, too, wrote. "No," she said, "I am running a dressmaker's shop." I edged away at the first opportunity, with a sigh of relief, and talked to somebody else, who then asked: "How did you like the Princess de G.?"—mentioning one of the great historic names of France. I turned and had another look at the dull woman and, lo, how fascinating she had become! She had changed no more than the Picasso reproduction that had turned out to be an original, but my frame of reference had changed, making her appear in a different context and in a different light. Thus, for instance, the fact that a descendant of those legendary figures was running a dressmaker's shop appeared significant in itself, and so did the terrible banality of her conversation. Ironically, further enquiry unearthed the fact that the Princess was a former mannequin, merely related by a short and episodic marriage to the house of G. This put her back into the original context—the Picasso was once more relegated to the staircase.

However, not more than two hundred years ago, my quick changes of attitude would not have been considered snobbish at

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all, but a natural consequence of an accepted hierarchy of values, according to which a Princess in her own right naturally took precedence over a person of common origin. And the passionate interest in Prince Charles's teeth would have appeared as a perfectly normal and touching manifestation of the populace's devotion to their future king. The Europe of the feudal era had indeed a nearly monolithic hierarchy of social values in which birth, rank, and station, appointed by the grace of God, provided a generally accepted yardstick. After the storming of the Bastille and the declaration of the Rights of Men, the system of values changed —at least theoretically. But the archetypal roots of the older values, and their symbols of noble kings and fair princesses, robber barons and chivalrous knights, have survived and constantly interfere with our liberal and democratic outlook. Pomp and circumstance, rank and consequence, title and lineage, have remained with us as a kind of psychological black-market currency under the social counter.

VII

EVERY variety of the innumerable forms of snobbery can be traced back to the same basic pattern, the overlapping of two different systems of value. The first, S^1, is the system on which we pretend or believe our judgements to be based—æsthetic criteria, personal attraction, intrinsic human qualities, and so on. The second, S^2, is the interfering system which distorts our judgement: fetish-worship, "Crillon complex," title, power, and so on. To repeat, in a more precise form, the proposed definition: *snobbery is the result of the psychological fusion of two independent value systems which are separate by origin and nature, but inextricably mixed up in the subject's mind.*

This does not mean that S^2, the "interfering" system, is in itself worthless; its emotional power, which distorts the values of S^1, is often derived from deep, archetypal sources. Only an inverted snob will pretend, for instance, that "the aristocracy," in the original sense of an élite formed by tradition and breeding, with the resulting high standards of comportment, manners, and taste, is devoid of value. European culture, prior to the fall of the Bastille, was by and large feudal and aristocratic; the ambiguity of the term "common man" reflects the brutal fact that a lower social standard was synonymous with coarser manners and vulgarity of taste. In countries which have either undergone a thorough social revolution, such as France or Soviet Russia, or are of a recent, pioneering origin, such as the United States and Australia, civilisation now rests indeed with the "common man," and the surviving aristocratic element has become a cultural fossil. But the situation is not the same in countries with a strong continuous tradition, such as England, where fairly sharp class distinctions survive in vocabulary, accent, tastes. That unique social amalgam of the lower fringes of the aristocracy and the top fringes of the mercantile bourgeoisie, known as the British upper middle class, has until recently provided the bulk of the nation's leaders in politics, literature, and the arts; even the *avant-garde* of Marxist writers in the thirties mostly had double-barrelled names. Accordingly, the "interfering" scale of values is indeed based on a great cultural heritage. The obsessive preoccupation of the British intelligentsia with the aristocracy is perhaps partly excusable on these lines. But when all allowances are made, snobbery remains a grotesque affliction of English society, motivated by the naïve desire to feel part of, or at least rubbing shoulders with, a social élite, however much in decline that élite may be. The Crillon complex appears on this level as the fear of not being a full-fledged contemporary on the social scene where the Battles of Arques are fought at first nights and cocktail parties. "Pends-toi, brave Evelyn: nous avons diné à Blenheim et tu n'y étais pas."

VIII

SO FAR, I have not mentioned the most obvious and widespread motivation of snobbery: the bolstering of the insecure ego

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through being accepted into the company of the high and mighty—whether these are represented by the titled, or moneyed, or artistic élite. But this kind of explanation of snobbery begs the question. The compensation of inferiority complexes is one of the basic psychological mechanisms; it does not explain why the snob seeks for compensation in his specific way. In his amusing book on *Snobs*, Russell Lynes says: "The snob is almost by definition insecure in his social (in the larger sense) relationships, and resorts to snobbishness as a means of massaging his ego. Since scarcely anyone is so secure that his ego does not sometimes need a certain amount of external manipulation, there is scarcely anyone who isn't a snob of some sort." True as far as it goes; but there are as many ways of massaging one's ego as there are human activities. From Demosthenes, who compensated his inborn stammering by forcing himself to talk with his mouth full of pebbles until he became the foremost orator of Greece, to Napoleon, who made up for his short stature and lowly birth by conquering Europe, a feeling of inadequacy has always been a powerful motor of ambition. The real question is why the same compensatory drive is satisfied in one case by creative achievement, in the other by grotesque and sterile attitudes. Most people are in need of "a certain amount of massaging of their egos"; but the snob needs, for his massage, an oil extracted from the olive groves overlooking the Blue Grotto of Capri.

Guided by an inappropriate standard of values, the snob's pursuits are sterile, and his satisfactions of a vicarious nature. He does not aim at power; he merely wants to rub shoulders with those who yield power, and bask in their reflected glory. A person with a genuine power-drive would rather be top of a group of his equals than bottom of a superior group; the snob's ambition is the reverse. He would rather be the lowest-ranking and just-tolerated hanger-on of the envied set or club, than a full-fledged member of the one to which by nature he belongs. He would rather stay in a stuffy cubbyhole in a luxury hotel than have a room with a bath and a view in the next-cheaper category; he does not seek the bodily comfort which makes luxury desirable, but the vicarious comfort of "staying at the Ritz." His social pleasures are equally perverted. He does not seek love, friendship, conviviality, but the cold, vicarious glow of being permitted to share the company of the select. The art snob's pleasures are not derived from the picture, but from the catalogue; the intellectual snob is not impressed by Kierkegaard, he is impressed by himself reading Kierkegaard. This perversion of values may even affect his biological instincts—his taste and smell preferences, his sexual inclinations. His procreative glands are stimulated, not by Boccaccio, but by Debrett; and a hundred years ago, when oysters and stout were the diet of the poor, the snob's taste-buds functioned in a different manner.

To sum up: the snob's satisfactions do not derive from the object of his preoccupation, but from some secondary consideration associated with it; they are pseudo-satisfactions. His drives are imitative, his labours barren, his pleasures vicarious, his triumphs self-delusions. The perfect symbol of it all is the show-off TV aerial on the roof of suburban houses—minus the television set.

IX

There's no doubt about it, the débutante of the nineteen-fifties has a harder life than most people imagine. Although (as a débutante was recently heard to remark) "Culture's the top thing really, and let's face it, that's a tiny bit of a bore," it isn't possible to devote the whole day to that. HOUSEWIFE, April 1954.

TO CATALOGUISE the various forms of snobbery would be a monumentally boring enterprise; I would like to mention, however, a few of the less obvious variants.

Take, for instance, the disrepute attached to the word "cleverness" in the idiom of the British upper classes, and the pride and delight its female members take in statements like: "I am hopeless about spelling," "about sums," "about geography and all that." Once

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon a time, the literati were ill-paid scribes, and earlier on slaves, while the upper classes went about their seignorial pursuits. The contempt in which knowledge, "cleverness," "braininess," are still held in the more fossilised upper strata of society is a distant, yet direct, echo of those bygone days.

A more subtle distortion of our intellectual values is caused by the emphasis in public schools on the humanities and the corresponding neglect of the sciences; the roots of this tradition are equally easy to trace in the past. Its paradoxical result is that people feel humiliated if they have to admit that they have not heard the name of some third-rate poet or painter, but confess with pride their total ignorance of the laws which govern the heredity of their children or the working of the electric light. In relation to his mechanised environment, modern man is thus reduced to the intellectual level of the savage. He starts his car and does not know why it runs, turns on the gas and does not know why it burns, swallows a pill and does not know why it makes him sleep; but he talks glibly about existentialism, abstracts, and *collage*.

In the social hierarchy, this state of affairs is reflected by the fact that the professions related to the humanities, the arts, and letters rank higher than those connected with engineering and the applied sciences. The Central European *Herr Ingenieur* is a gentleman and the French *polytechniciens* are a social élite; an engineer in England hovers between the working and the middle class. One wonders to what extent the steady loss of ground by British industry to German and American competition is caused by this type of snobbery influencing vocational choice.

This perversion has its reverse side. The age of science has brought with it a growing emphasis on the quantitative, measurable aspects of all phenomena. By various methods of physical measurement, we have learnt to reduce quality to quantity; thus, for instance, we are able to reduce colour and sound to vibrational frequencies which can be expressed by simple figures. Similarly, we can express the qualities of objects, energies, and movements by quantitative equations. This process has led to the dangerous mental habit, not merely of *explaining* quality by quantity, but of *replacing* the concept of quality by that of measurable quantity. In American parlance, a man is "worth" his bank account; the value of a painter is "quoted," and has its ups and downs like a share on the stock exchange; the value of a book is expressed by its rating on the best-seller list; the radio performances of a Bach cantata and of a sobbing crooner are compared on the same scale of audience-rating. This application of quantitative yardsticks to the measurement of quality is one of the most frightening perversions of values; yet essentially it is merely another variant of the mental confusion which makes the snob assess the æsthetic value of a picture by its age and provenance.

Another type of snobbery, produced by contempt for cleverness, is the deliberate cultivation of personal mannerisms, the building up of an "anecdotical personality." In a society where it is considered bad conversational form to discuss anything in earnest, and good form to avert this danger by giving the subject an anecdotic twist, mannerisms are apt to grow like weeds, stifling intellectual exchange; and an eccentric or at least slightly dotty façade, becomes the safest means to make an impression on society. Simplicity and directness are of no avail; the snob's ambition is not to have but to be "a character." Even great intellects are affected by the virus: Shaw's clowning, the donnishness of English dons, the studied stammer of the highbrow, the premium set on eccentricity, are symptoms of the prevalence of manner over mind.

An equally obvious phenomenon is inverted snobbery. A simple reversal of the conventional scale of values produces the athletes of modesty, the exhibitionists of self-effacement, the dandyism of black fingernails, the coquetry of ignorance. The next craze of the age of the bubble-gum will perhaps follow the slogan: sex-appeal through halytosis. If we contrast the hyper-sensitive and hyper-articulate heroes of Proust with the dumb

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and inarticulate heroes of Hemingway, we have defined the range of literary snobbery on a reversible scale.

Lastly, I must mention the melancholy figure of the "knowing snob" who, unlike the naïve or genuine snob, knows that snobbery is a bad thing and yet admits with resigned insight that he cannot live without this delightful poison, or indispensable crutch, whichever the case may be. The purest examples of the knowing, self-despising, yet incurable category of snobs, are to be found among the English writers of our time.

X

Is the poison really so delightful? I have mentioned in a previous book that I have always wanted to write a sequel to La Fontaine's fable of The Fox and the Grapes. The poor fox, mocked by his friends, conscious of his defeat, develops an inferiority complex for which, he knows, there is only one cure. Night after night, while the other members of the pack are having a good time by stealing nice fat hens, he is secretly engaged in taking climbing lessons. After several weeks of dogged effort, he finally does succeed in getting at the grapes—only to find that a terrible disappointment has been waiting for him. The coveted grapes really *are* sour, as he had pretended from the beginning. But who will believe him? He himself can hardly believe that the beautiful, so succulent-looking grapes are hard and acid as gall. The grapes become an obsession with him. He has to go on climbing after them, panting and sweating, and to go on eating the beastly fruit for the sole purpose of proving to himself that he is man enough, or fox enough, to reach them. He gets more and more skinny on this diet and, after a nervous breakdown, dies of gastric ulcers.

The parable is meant to illustrate the tragedy of snobs and careerists of the more intelligent kind. The sophisticated snob knows quite well that the select club or set into which he has gained admittance, after such strenuous efforts, is stale and uninspiring; yet he feels compelled to live off that arid vineyard to prove to himself that it is within his reach. The same is true of obsessional success hunters in every field—film stars and business executives, lady-killers and social hostesses. After the first successful climb they find out that the coveted fruit is not at all what they imagined it to be. Yet they live under the compulsion to go on sweating and straining and guzzling the bitter fruit to the bitter end.

Wherever we turn, the contemporary scene is populated by skinny foxes feasting on sour grapes. Only the most common and low-brow foxes take an interest in rabbits and hens. The result is a collective indigestion, a social neurosis on a vast and unprecedented scale, which reflects the general distortion of values in all fields of modern civilisation.

Thus the all-pervading phenomenon of snobbery turns out to be a reflection of a spiritual crisis, and of the moral and intellectual chaos which accompanies it. In the absence of any firm standards of value, it is inevitable that the wrong type of scale should be applied to the wrong object. Modern man gropes his way through this confusing world, armed with a compass which always points in the wrong direction, and a measuring rod which, a reversal of the magic wand, turns everything it touches to dust; engaged in shadow pursuits which provide him with shadow satisfactions in the metaphysical darkness.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

W. S. Merwin

The Mountain

ONLY on the rarest occasions, when the blue air,
Though clear, is not too blinding (as, say,
For a particular moment just at dusk in autumn)
Or if the clouds should part suddenly
Between freshets in spring, can one trace the rising
Slopes high enough to call them contours; and even
More rarely see above the treeline. Then
It is with almost a shock that one recognizes
What supposedly one had known always:
That it is, in fact, a mountain; not merely
This restrictive sense of nothing level, of never
Being able to go anywhere
But up or down, until it seems probable
Sometimes that the slope, to be so elusive
And yet so inescapable, must be nothing
But ourselves: that we have grown with one
Foot shorter than the other, and would deform
The levellest habitat to our misshapen
Condition, as is said of certain hill creatures.

Standing between two other peaks, but not
As they: or so we have seen in a picture
Whose naïve audacity, founded as far as can be
Determined, on nothing but the needs
Of its own composition, presents all three
As shaped oddly, of different colours, rising
From a plan whose flatness appears incredible
To such as we. Of course to each of us
Privately, its chief difference from its peers
Rests not even in its centrality, but its
Strangeness composed of our won intimacy
With a part of it, our necessary
Ignorance of its limits, and diurnal pretence
That what we see of it is all. Learned opinions differ
As to whether it was ever actively
Volcanic. It is believed that if one could see it
Whole, its shape might make this clearer, but that
Is impossible, for at the distance at which in theory
One could see it all, it would be out of sight.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of course in all the sense in which any
Place or thing can be said not to exist
Until someone, at least, is known to have been there,
It would help immeasurably if anyone
Should ever manage to climb it. No one,
From whatever distance, has ever so much as seen
The summit, or even anywhere near it; not, that is,
As far as we know. At one time the attempt
Was a kind of holy maelstrom, Mecca
For fanatics and madmen, and a mode of ritual
And profane suicide (since among us there is nowhere
From which one could throw oneself down). But there have been
Expeditions even quite recently, and with the benefit
Of the most expensive equipment. Very few
Who set out at all seriously have
Come back. At a relatively slight distance
Above us, apparently the whole aspect and condition
Of the mountain changes completely; there is ceaseless wind
With a noise like thunder and the beating of wings.

Indeed, if one considers the proximity
Of the point at which so much violence
Is known to begin, it is not our failure
That strikes one as surprising, but our impunity:
The summer camps on near gradients, ski-lifts in winter,
And even our presence where we are. For of those
Who attained any distance and returned, most
Were deafened, some permanently; some were blind,
And these also often incurably; all
Without exception were dazzled, as by a great light. And those
Who perhaps went furthest and came back, seemed
To have completely lost the use of our language,
Or if they spoke, babbled incoherently
Of silence bursting beyond that clamour, of time
Passed there not passing here, which we could not understand,
Of time no time at all. These characteristic
Effects of the upper slopes—especially the derangement
Of time-sense, and the dazzling—seem from earliest
Antiquity to have excited speculation.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One legend has it that a remote king-priest figure
Once gained the summit, spent some—to him non-sequent
But to them significant—time there, and returned
"Shining," bearing ciphers of the arcane (which,
Translated into the common parlance, proved
To be a list of tribal taboos) like clastic
Specimens, and behaved with a glacial violence
Later construed as wisdom. This, though
Charming, does not, in the light of current endeavour
Seem possible, even though so long ago. Yet
To corroborate this story, in the torrent
Gold has been found which even at this
Late date appears to have been powdered by hand,
And (further to confuse inquiry) several
Pediments besides, each with four sockets shaped
As though to receive the hoof of a giant statue
Of some two-toed ungulate. Legend being
What it is, there are those who still insist
He will come down again some day from the mountain.

As there are those who say it will fall on us. It
Will fall. And those who say it has already
Fallen. It has already fallen. Have we not
Seen it fall in shadow, evening after evening,
Across everything we can touch; do we not build
Our houses out of the great hard monoliths
That have crashed down from far above us? Shadows
Are not without substance, remind and predict;
And we know we live between greater commotions
Than any we can describe. But, most important:
Since this, though we know so little of it, is
All we know, is it not whatever it makes us
Believe of it—even the old woman
Who laughs, pointing, and says that the clouds across
Its face are wings of seraphim? Even the young
Man who, standing on it, declares it is not
There at all. He stands with one leg habitually
Bent, to keep from falling, as though he had grown
That way, as is said of certain hill creatures.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hugh Seton-Watson

The Intellectuals

V: Russia

THE word "intelligentsia" is Russian, and it was in Russia that the phenomenon itself first appeared. Most people in the West who regard themselves as reasonably well-educated have at least vaguely heard of the frustrated revolutionary intelligentsia of Russia, and when they think of it, it is as something uniquely Russian, a bizarre feature of the outlandish country that produced such people as Dostoevsky. Yet it is important to distinguish between those aspects of the Russian intelligentsia which are specifically Russian and those which are not. The great personalities of Russian intellectual history, like all great personalities, are unique. Some of the ideas, and perhaps still more the approach to ideas—the mental framework—of the Russian intelligentsia, can be traced to the specific influence of Russian history. But the social predicament was not and is not unique. The conditions which produced in 19th century Russia a frustrated and, in part, revolutionary intelligentsia, have repeated and are repeating themselves in one country after another in Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The conditions in which the intelligentsia of Communist Russia live are likely to repeat themselves, and indeed are already repeating themselves, in other countries subjected to totalitarian rule. Neither predicament—pre-revolutionary or post-totalitarian—has any close parallel in Western societies, at least in the last two centuries. But because this is so, it is all the more necessary that Westerners should make an effort of imagination to understand them. Otherwise the West cannot hope to understand the social forces which are today profoundly affecting almost the whole world outside the "north-west corner" of Europe and North America.

THE Russian intelligentsia is derived from the secular intellectual élite which grew up in Western Europe after the Reformation. Many generations of West European secular thought produced the radical political ideas of 18th century France, which determined the political development of 19th century Europe. Their offspring—liberalism, nationalism, and socialism—reached Russia in the mid-19th century, through the educated élite or intelligentsia. One might say that the French *philosophes* were an intelligentsia, a separate social category whose business was thought and culture, not administration or production, and who observed, disliked, and brilliantly criticised the social and political order around them. In this they resembled their Russian disciples. But there is also a basic difference. Voltaire and the illiterate French agricultural labourer were not much alike; Voltaire lived

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

better, and knew more, than the labourer; yet both belonged to the same culture. Voltaire's ideas derived from a cultural tradition which had arisen on French soil, from French roots. Voltaire criticised an image, distorted perhaps, yet recognisable, of French reality. But the Russian intellectuals of the mid-19th century imported, ready-made from the West, ideas related to the reality of the West, not to the reality of Russia. Chernyshevsky and the Russian *muzhik* belonged to different cultures: their relationship was different in kind from that between Voltaire and the French peasant. This situation is without parallel in the West. It existed in the late 19th century in the Balkans, in the early 20th in Japan and Turkey. It exists today in India and Egypt and West Africa.

Modern secular education was introduced into Russia by Peter the Great, who sent young men abroad to learn military, naval, and industrial skills. Under Elizabeth and Catherine II, French social graces became popular at the Russian court, Russian landowners engaged Frenchmen as tutors to their children, and Russian noblemen went to Paris to enjoy themselves. By the end of the 18th century, Western learning was beginning to be taken seriously in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and Western radicalism was finding its first Russian pupils. Alexander I laid the foundations of a system of state education, and this was extended under his successor. By the middle of the 19th century, two important new developments had taken place.

The first was the appearance of a considerable number of persons, possessing a modern education, who were not government officials. For several decades after Peter, education had been regarded as a means of improving the efficiency of generals, admirals, diplomats, and governors. It was at the summit of these professions that one could find the best-educated Russians. By the 1820's a large part of the nobility were seeking a modern education for their children, whether or not they intended to make a career in State service, while economic development also created a demand for new professions—teaching, the law, medicine. Thus, there appeared social groups which corresponded to the "free professions" of Western society.

The second development was the attainment of modern education by children of non-noble parents (*raznochintsy*). It is true that the Ministers of Education under Nicholas I attempted to restrict access to higher education, and this remained, indeed, a feature of Russian educational policy right up to 1905, even to 1917. Financial obstacles were supplemented by periodic changes in the curriculum of schools designed to make things hard for plebeian children. But these measures were ineffective: they delayed but did not prevent the spread of secondary and university education. Higher education advanced faster than primary education: the numbers of university graduates grew rapidly, but village schools lagged behind. This is of course no specifically Russian phenomenon. It has repeated itself in the Balkans, China, the Ottoman Empire, and most European colonial empires.

The Russian university graduate of 1870 was the cultural equal and cultural contemporary of his colleague in France or Britain or Germany, while the great majority of his compatriots still lived in the Muscovite past. If he was himself of plebeian origin, he was more painfully aware of the contrast than if he was a son of the nobility. If he was not an official but a member of the "free professions," he was isolated not only from the masses but also from the machinery of government, and he could the more easily preserve the purity of the revolutionary ideas which he had acquired in his university years—a purity uncontaminated by any experience of the prosaic business of government. He could not fail to be appalled by the backwardness and misery of the Russian village and the new industrial slums; but he soon discovered that to protest against these conditions would bring down on his head the heavy hand of the Tsar's policemen. More narrowly personal and material causes of frustration were also not lacking. His education and skill would not necessarily give him

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an attractive career, still less the respect of the bureaucrats. If he was a member of a religious minority (dissenter, sectarian, or Jew) or of a non-Russian nation (Pole, Georgian, or Tartar), the obstacles to his ambition were still greater.

In these conditions it is not surprising that the whole non-official educated class of Russia was profoundly alienated from the political and social régime. The word *intelligentsia*, which essentially denotes the "free professions," soon acquired an undertone of opposition to the régime. No member of the intelligentsia could be a supporter of the régime, and no convinced supporter of the régime could be considered a member of the intelligentsia. This does not, of course, mean that no bureaucrat could be so considered, for there were bureaucrats who detested the régime they served. Still less is this true of government employees in the wide sense, which included university professors, schoolmasters, and many doctors.

THE intelligentsia, oppositional by its very nature, contained both admirers and critics of the West, both revolutionaries and reformers.

The famous controversy between "Westernisers" and "Slavophiles" was the main intellectual issue of the 1830's and 1840's. The distinction was not as clear as is often supposed. Even the extreme Westerniser, Chaadaev, believed in a great and independent destiny for Russia. Herzen himself at times showed signs of pan-Slav romanticism. On the other hand the earlier Slavophiles denounced bureaucratic rule and wished to abolish serfdom: Kireevsky even admired English liberalism. The difference was one not so much of precise ideas or policies as of mental attitudes. The Westernisers were predisposed, on principle, to favour at least the more recent and "progressive" Western ideas and movements. The Slavophiles were inclined to idealise the Russian past, to exaggerate or even to imagine special virtues in the ancient rulers and subjects of Moscow; they liked to persuade themselves that all that the West had done Russia could do better, and in her own way. These two contrasted attitudes are not confined to Russia—parallels can be found in the history of Japan, Turkey, and the Arab world in the last hundred years. In Russia the division continued long after the original Westerniser-Slavophile controversy had become stale. It is clearly recognisable in the disputes between Marxist and Populist Socialists in the 1890's, between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks from 1906 to 1917, and even in the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin.

The general alienation of the intelligentsia from the régime, from at least the mid-1860's on, provided a favourable mental climate, first for radical ideas, and then for revolutionary movements. It was not enough to accept the new doctrines. It was felt to be the duty of the intellectual to place his knowledge at the service of the people, to devote his life to the task of liberating the masses, to lead them to social revolution. The small discussion groups and tiny conspiratorial factions of the sixties were followed by the "Going to the People" of the 1870's. University students, both men and girls, went to the village, first naïvely haranguing the uncomprehending peasants, then settling in their midst and seeking their confidence by becoming craftsmen or medical orderlies or midwives, or even learning to be professional sectarian preachers. But arrests, banishment, and imprisonment forced the revolutionaries to create a disciplined underground party. The first efficient conspiracy, the People's Will of 1879–1881, had few members but successfully carried out a series of assassinations, culminating in that of Tsar Alexander II himself. The police, which had failed to save its master, managed to break up the organisation after his death. But the example of People's Will was copied at the turn of the century by other revolutionaries, including Lenin, who in his *What is to be done* (1902) called for systematic training of "professional revolutionaries."

It is a serious error to confuse the intelligentsia as a whole with the professional revolutionaries—whether Bolshevik or Socialist Revolutionary ("SR"). The professionals

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were only a small minority—but it was from the intelligentsia that they were recruited. The intelligentsia as a whole regarded the régime as its enemy. It felt no loyalty towards it, recognised no obligation to defend it. Though most Russian intellectuals were not themselves active revolutionaries, and did not even agree with the revolutionaries' ideas, in the last resort they disliked the revolutionaries less than they disliked the Tsar and his bureaucrats. Certain plants grow only in certain soils. If such had not been the mental climate of the whole intelligentsia, the professional revolutionaries would not have become a serious force in Russia.

The alienation of the intelligentsia from the régime is not a peculiarly Russian phenomenon. The same general situation can be found in China at the beginning of this century, or in Hungary in the 1930's, and at various periods in the history of modern Spain. Nor is the "Going to the People" specifically Russian. Very similar attitudes can be found, for example, in the 1930's among such diverse groups of people as the Serbian Communist students, the Roumanian Iron Guardists, and the Hungarian "village explorer" writers. In the field of conspiratorial party organisation it must be admitted that the Russians were pioneers, followed in other lands by both Communist and other revolutionaries. In this field both People's Will and Bolsheviks can claim to have made original contributions.

THOUGH the social predicament of the 19th century Russian intelligentsia differed radically from that of the 18th century French, its general approach to ideas was rather similar. The French intellectuals' long struggle against the alliance of absolute monarchy and Catholic Church had brought many of them into irreconcilable conflict with Christianity. Some were content to be sceptics, to do without a religion. But many required another faith to replace that which they had lost. Political doctrines had to satisfy not only political but also spiritual needs. They repudiated the Kingdom of Heaven in the life after death: instead they would instal the Reign of Virtue in this life. This was within the power of human reason, and it was the bounden duty of humane and rational men to do it, at whatever cost. Those misguided persons who resisted the rule of reason and virtue were enemies of the human race, and must take the consequences.

In France this conception of human affairs did not prevail for long. It met with resistance not only from the ancient institutions —church, army, and bureaucracy—but also from strong social forces—the rising bourgeoisie and an increasingly self-reliant peasantry—and from a deeply-rooted secular culture marked by the spirit of scepticism and inquiry. The development of France in the 19th century did not favour maximalist utopians. But there were other parts of Europe where the attractions of a secular religion to the embittered intelligentsia were not thus matched by institutional or social or cultural counter-forces. Such were the three regions which had been for several centuries forcibly removed from the prevalent civilisation of Europe—Spain, the Balkans, and Russia. The similarities between these three regions should not, of course, be exaggerated. There is an obvious distinction between the maritime, commercial-minded nations (Catalans and Greeks) and the land-locked, almost exclusively peasant nations (Castilians, South Slavs, and Roumanians).* The Russians remained essentially a land-locked nation even many decades after Peter the Great's death. The similarities betwen Spanish and Russian

* Catalans and Greeks in the 19th century were in their great majority peasants too. But the seafaring, commercial-minded element was numerous, and made an enormous contribution to these nations' culture, not least by bringing them into contact with north-western Europe. I am also aware that the Croats of the Adriatic coast had a seafaring and commercial tradition. But the great majority of South Slavs were untouched by such influences. A similar, though not identical, distinction could be drawn between North-Central and South Italy. Poland and Hungary were essentially land-locked states, with little commercial tradition, but the culture of their educated class had been that of Europe at least since the late Middle Ages.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

history have often been pointed out—the strength of the monarchical power, the absence of an influential social élite, the savage patriotism of the peasant masses in the face of Napoleon's armies.* On the level of ideas, Spanish anarchism and Russian nihilism are alike in this, that their exponents sought at once political and spiritual goals. The Balkan peoples, re-entering European culture at a still later date, were similarly affected.

The high proportion of sons of priests among the first generations of non-noble Russian intelligentsia is a special factor that deserves emphasis. This factor was also important in the Orthodox Balkan countries in the 20th century. A substantial number of Serbian Communist and Roumanian fascist revolutionaries came from priestly families. In Imperial Russia, the desire to find in politics a spiritual substitute for religion was likely to be especially strong in children of priests and pupils of seminaries.† It is probable that the history both of official Orthodoxy and of the schismatic and sectarian communities contains valuable clues to the mentality of the Russian intelligentsia. This is a subject that Soviet scholars are obviously unable to explore, but to which Western historians may some day make useful contributions.

An "all-or-nothing" outlook characterised the Russian intelligentsia, yet was not specifically Russian. Perhaps more specific was the ruthless logic with which Russian intellectuals pursued their thoughts to their final conclusion, oblivious to anything outside their own narrow mental groove. Ruthless logic is widely believed to be a French quality. The Russian intelligentsia learned both its earliest ideas and its habits of thought from the French, but its *jusqu'auboutisme* puts its masters to shame. This may well be due to purely Russian traditions, and here again it is to the history of church and sects that one should turn for enlightenment. But it was certainly reinforced by the social and political status of the intelligentsia. Isolated almost equally from the Russian masses and from the machinery of government, the radical intellectuals could live in the abstract world of their ideas. All political doctrines, conceived in opposition, have to be modified in practice as their bearers acquire experience of government. But in 19th century Russia the intellectuals had no power and no responsibility. Uncontaminated by sordid political realities, they could preserve their revolutionary purity.

As DIRECT criticism of the political system of 19th century Russia was prevented by censorship, new political ideas could only find indirect expression in literary criticism. The pioneer in this field was V. G. Belinsky (1810–48), a convinced democrat, social radical, and anti-clerical, who exercised an enormous influence on the Russian intelligentsia up to 1917, and is even venerated as a minor patron saint by the present leaders of the Soviet Union. His successors carried even further the use of literary criticism for political purposes. The priest's son, N. A. Dobrolyubov (1836–61), a grimly high-minded young man, established the doctrine of revolutionary utilitarianism in cultural matters, which was expressed even more sharply by D. I. Pisarev (1840–68), the prototype of the "Nihilist." Literature and art were of value only in so far as they contributed to the radical cause; they were to be judged, not by their inherent merit, but by their social purpose. Russia's greatest poet, Pushkin, had died long before this doctrine

---

* The differences are of course also obvious. Spain had been part of Catholic Europe since the 15th century, and most of it for several centuries longer than this. Moreover, peasants and noblemen from landlocked Castile had crossed the Atlantic in their thousands to found a New World there. The colonisation of Siberia by Russian peasants or of the Don and Kuban steppes by Russian and Ukrainian Cossacks is not very comparable. Yet the similarities remain, and call for explanation. They have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

† Not all seminarists were children of priests, though the latter enjoyed the hereditary privilege of free education in seminaries. Nor were all seminarists necessarily religious-minded. This can hardly be said to be a dominant characteristic of the Tiflis seminarist, Joseph Vissarionovich Djugashvili.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

became respectable, and such great prose writers as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky never conformed to it. Pisarev's most extreme judgments did not find much support, but the substance of the revolutionary utilitarian creed was sufficiently accepted by the intelligentsia to have lasting effects. It was no less harmful to Russian culture than were the activities of the notorious Supreme Procurator of the Holy Synod, the reactionary counsellor of the last two Tsars, Konstantin Pobedonostsev. Russian intellectual life in fact suffered from two separate obscurantisms, whose parallel streams at last merged in the Soviet era. Pobedonostsev and Dobrolyubrov were the two spiritual grandfathers of the late A. A. Zhdanov.

Even the Westernisers in most cases rejected the social forces and institutions in the West from which their ideas had been derived. Belinsky recognised that the bourgeoisie was a constructive force in Western society. His contemporary Herzen, however, was rapidly disgusted with the French bourgeoisie, and nearly thirty years of residence in Western Europe did not enable him to see Western society otherwise than through Russian eyes. The hatred displayed by Russian intellectuals—from the 1850's onwards—for the bourgeoisie is difficult for a Western student of history to understand. Neither the misery of the peasants, which aroused the just indignation of the intellectuals, nor the unjust tyranny of Tsardom, which deprived educated persons of free speech, were caused by the bourgeoisie. The denunciation by Western socialists of Western capitalists was based on real facts, but had little relevance to Russian society. Russian radical intellectuals imported socialist doctrines from the West ready-made, but hatred of the bourgeois was not due only to socialist doctrine. The whole bourgeois ethos, the notions of compromise and of quantitative measurement, were repugnant to them. Not more trade and more prosperity, but the reign of virtue on earth was their aim.

The notion of law also had little meaning for them. They could not conceive that the principle of the rule of law could be important. That even those things which they most admired in the West had been made possible only by the growth of the rule of law, did not occur to them. Laws meant to them either decrees of autocrats or machinations of narrow-minded merchants. Nor did they understand the principle of choice in government. Tsardom in Russia was wrong because it was reactionary. It would be replaced by a government of the people, which would reflect the people's will. Then the reign of virtue would begin. That it was important to provide a machinery that would enable the people to choose between different aspirants to power, did not occur to them. Constitutions were sordid tricks of bourgeois lawyers.

These attitudes were widespread among the Russian intelligentsia long before Marx's doctrines were known, and still longer before any Marxist organisations existed on Russian soil.* But this mental climate was of course extremely favourable for Marxism. The Marxist baby-and-bathwater doctrine that, because bourgeois judges are influenced by class prejudice (which of course is often true), therefore the principle that law is above class and above persons must be rejected, found quick and enthusiastic support among Russian revolutionary intellectuals. So did Marxist contempt for "bourgeois constitutions." In a sense Soviet spokesmen are right in depicting Belinsky and Dobrolyubov as forerunners of Lenin. If they were more generous they would add the names of Karamzin and Pobedonostsev.

But it would be wrong to imagine that liberal values made no appeal to the Russian intelligentsia. Side by side with the two parallel obscurantisms there grew up, from the 1860's on, a liberal tradition. One of its strongholds was the legal profession. Alexander II's judicial reform of 1864 gave

* Marx's *Kapital* was published in Russian translation in 1872. Small discussion groups of Marxist intellectuals existed in the 1880's, Marxist workers' groups in the late 1890's. The Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party was founded in 1898, but it did not become a serious political force inside Russia until 1905.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia a modern system of justice, and during the fifty years of its operation it achieved very high standards. Russian judges and barristers were equal in learning and integrity to their British or French colleagues. The other main stronghold was local government. The provincial and district zemstvos, and some municipalities, achieved much for good government, welfare, and education in the broadest sense. Change was especially rapid in the ten years following the abortive revolution of 1905. It is true that these were years of political reaction. The first, truly representative Dumas (parliaments) of 1906 and 1907 were followed by assemblies elected on a restricted franchise, and the government was never made responsible to the Duma. But there was a free press, free publication of political literature, and freedom to organise political parties and meetings.* All major issues of policy were publicly discussed, both inside and outside the Duma. Industry made extraordinary progress. Both the business class and the working class were growing in numbers, skill, social influence, and independence of mind. Both were approaching the level of the equivalent classes in Central Europe. Of the peasants, a large minority benefited directly from Stolypin's reforms, while the majority were at last obtaining a primary education.

In this greatly changed political and social climate the attitudes of the intelligentsia were also changing. Revolutionary utilitarianism was losing ground. This was a period of experiments in Russian literature. Philosophy and history were treated as serious subjects of study, rather than raw material for revolutionary slogans. The meaning of law, and the value of sound political institutions, were more widely recognised than ever before. As in the past, almost all educated Russians who were not senior bureaucrats—and even some who were—rejected the political system as it was, but there was much less desire for a cataclysmic upheaval followed by utopia. The intelligentsia was now divided between the progressives who wished to build, on social and cultural foundations that were already strong, a free Russia that would take its place in a free Europe, and the maximalist obscurantists who clung to the anachronism of "all-or-nothing." This division was different from the old cleavage between Westerners and Slavophiles, which had been an argument about ideas, neither group having had much contact with reality. In 1914 both the legal and social progress pursued by the progressives, and the revolutionary movements cherished by the obscurantists, were realities. The progressives did not deny the backwardness of Russia or the lack of political consciousness of the Russian peasants, nor did they reject in principle the use of force against the autocracy. But they looked to the future, and time seemed to be working in their favour.*

But time ran out. The chief victim of World War I was Russia. After three years of heroic effort, the Russian armies succumbed to the combined effects of the German onslaught and Nicholas II's leadership, surely the most ignoble that a great nation has ever

---

* The nature of this period has been grossly distorted by those Western writers who take their information mainly from Lenin or other revolutionaries who lived in exile abroad after 1906. It is true that there was brutal repression in areas of armed revolt in 1906. It is true that the political police retained large powers, and that some provincial governors showed little respect for the law even after 1907. It is also true that issues of newspapers which incited to armed rebellion were liable to be suppressed. But when all this has been said it remains true that the years 1907–14 were the period of greatest civil liberty in the entire history of Russia.

* The outlook to which I refer could be found in some Populist and Marxist socialists, as well as among the liberals in the political sense —the Constitutional Democratic or "Kadet" Party. The labour movement within Russia was largely moving in this direction, to the rage of Lenin, who denounced its leaders as "Liquidators." Perhaps the most striking expression of the search of the intelligentsia for new paths was the symposium *Landmarks*, published in 1909, with contributions from the former Marxists Struve, Berdyaev, and Bulgakov, who not only rejected revolutionary utilitarianism but challenged the whole radical approach, sanctified by Belinsky, towards Christianity.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

endured. Tsardom was overthrown and in the following months the Russian state machine disintegrated. In the chaos that spread throughout the country, despair combined with utopian maximalist longings. The progressive part of the intelligentsia came apparently to power, but the new rulers lacked political experience and were deprived of the apparatus of law and government to carry out their orders. Placed between a ruthless invader and hard-pressed, exacting allies, they could neither continue the war nor make peace. This was the opportunity for the maximalists. In 1913 they were an anachronism, but 1917 was their historic hour. Of the two groups of maximalists, the extreme wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries or the Bolsheviks, the second were far superior in leadership and discipline. Lenin made good use of most of his chances. Not the ineluctable progress of history, but a fortuitous combination of exceptionally favourable internal and international forces raised him to supreme power.

THOUSANDS of the Russian intelligentsia perished in the civil war—in battle or famine or before firing squads of Reds or Whites. Thousands more emigrated to Europe, America, or China. But most remained in Russia, to live as best they could under the new autocracy. Most persuaded themselves that, cruel and boorish though the Bolsheviks might be, they were preferable to White generals who would have installed a more bloodthirsty version of the pre-1905 régime. They were therefore willing to work for the new rulers, hoping thus to work for the progress of their country. In many cases reluctant consent changed in the course of years to ardent support. For their part, the Bolsheviks needed educated persons, and they accepted them with contemptuous tolerance. But here, too, practical experience brought change. In many cases, members of the intelligentsia convinced their bosses of their loyalty, and were even admitted to the Communist Party. Stalin's revolution, the forced industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture which began in 1929, increased their importance: administrators, managers, scientists, and technicians were needed as never before. The posts of command were still largely held by members of the pre-1917 intelligentsia, but Soviet schools and universities had already begun to turn out a younger generation of experts, presumed both technically efficient and politically reliable.

The turning point was the Yezhov purge of 1936–8. This destroyed not only the leading officials of the party and government hierarchies, but also most survivors of the old intelligentsia who held responsible positions. Their place was taken by new men and women educated since 1921, and especially since 1929. From now on, the intelligentsia, which even in 1931 had received some kind words from Stalin, became definitely respectable. At the eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party, held in 1939 just after the *Yezhovshchina* had spent its force, it was A. A. Zhdanov who took up its cause. The new Soviet intelligentsia, children of workers and peasants educated under a worker-peasant authority, were entitled, he insisted, to a place of honour in Soviet society. Since then the authority of what has become known as "the toiling intelligentsia" has been steadily reinforced. Stalin himself said that there are only two "classes" in Soviet society —the workers and the peasants—but spoke of the "toiling intelligentsia" as a "class stratum," something less precisely definable than a class, yet distinct from the workers or peasants. In practice, what is called the "toiling intelligentsia" includes the whole ruling class of the Soviet Union.

The problem of the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union differs fundamentally from that of the intelligentsia of pre-1917 Russia or of contemporary Asia or Africa. The difference is due to the cultural modernisation of Russia and to the changed relationship of intellectuals to other non-manual worker groups. The essence of the predicament of the old Russian intelligentsia, and of the intelligentsia of Asia or Africa today, is that it belongs to a different culture from its own people. This is not the case in the Soviet Union. Industrialisation, urbanisation, and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mass education have greatly narrowed, if not yet quite closed, the cultural gap. Nearly half the population now live in towns. Nearly all peasant children at least go to a primary school. Education is completely standardised, under the ultimate control of the Agitprop department of the Central Committee of the Party. The means of mass communication and persuasion extend even to the remotest settlements. It is true that the quality of rural education leaves much to be desired, as Khrushchev himself has admitted. Nearly all the material progress of thirty-five years has gone into the towns, and the material and psychological contrasts between town and country are still great—but they are comparable in degree to the difference between town and country in say, France in 1870, rather than in Russia in 1913. The Russian intellectual and the Russian peasants do not live in different centuries as was the case in the age of Nicholas II.

The current phrase, "toiling intelligentsia," covers all who are not manual workers in factory or field. In 1939 it was said to number 9·6 million, at the end of the Second World War 11·8 million, today about 15 million. It includes all bureaucrats, army officers, large and small managers, and clerical staff. According to the 1939 figures, those whose professions corresponded to the pre-1917 intelligentsia numbered about four million, among whom were 969,000 teachers, 132,000 doctors, and 250,000 engineers and architects. Later figures for these groups give 1,600,000 teachers (1950), 300,000 doctors (1952), and 900,000 engineers and architects (1947). If these are an indication of the general trend, the groups corresponding to the old intelligentsia have probably increased to about eight million out of a "toiling intelligentsia" of fifteen million with dependents rather more than twice this number.

The problems of the intelligentsia in the narrower sense are to a large extent the same as those of the "class stratum" as a whole. The members of this social group enjoy comparatively good material conditions, and are able to give their children a good start in life through a system of higher education which definitely favours the wealthier.* What they lack is security for themselves and their families, and formal recognition of their place in society. They are still at the mercy of party politicians who can interfere in their lives and waste their time with hours of indoctrination, exhortation, and commination.

THE pre-1917 Russian intelligentsia was a distinct social category, with no parallel in the class structures of Western countries either today or a hundred years ago. Those who in the Soviet Union of today practise the same professions—that is, the intelligentsia in the strict sense—form only a part of the "toiling intelligentsia." The whole group to which this name is applied may be not inappropriately described as a bourgeoisie—not a private bourgeoisie but a state bourgeoisie, which to a striking degree performs the same functions as its European or American counterparts of one and two centuries ago. In many ways, the relationship of the real intelligentsia to the State bourgeoisie is similar to the relationship of the free professions to the bourgeoisie as a whole in Victorian England or Wilhelminian Germany.

The real intelligentsia is an important group, and in certain respects its outlook and aspirations are bound to differ from those of the State bourgeoisie as a whole. A Soviet writer or teacher differs from a Soviet manager as an English writer of 1850 differed from a self-made capitalist. He is a more educated person, he attaches more importance to freedom of opinion and research, and he represents a tradition of literary and

* In 1940 fees were introduced for university education and for the top classes of secondary schools, which would severely strain the resources of unskilled worker or peasant parents. There are scholarships for the best university students but none for secondary schools. The government proposes to make secondary education universal during the 1960's, but it is fairly clear that the quality of secondary schools will greatly vary, and that access to the leading universities will be mainly reserved, as hitherto, for children of the upper social groups plus a sprinkling of exceptionally talented children of humbler origin.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

academic values much older than the Soviet industrial revolution which began in 1929. In Victorian Britain the tastes of capitalists were not the law of the land. In the Soviet Union the party bosses enforce on writers, artists, and composers a combination of Marxist-Leninist theology with the æsthetic standards of the State bourgeoisie. One can imagine what would have been the fate of British or French literature, art, or music had a committee of captains of industry possessed absolute power to decide what works should be produced. The late A. A. Zhdanov was, as we have seen, the heir to both Pobedonostsev and Dobrolyubov, but his preference for nice, catchy tunes and moralising "optimistic" literary themes would have made him feel at home in a Birmingham drawing-room in 1870.

Though the revolutionary utilitarianism of Dobrolyubov had done much to distort Russian thought, the rich flowering of literature and art throughout the 19th century created a great æsthetic tradition which neither Lenin nor Stalin could destroy, which indeed they have even strengthened by their publication of Russian classics in editions running into many millions. Soviet writers and artists are aware of this tradition, and defend it when they get the chance. This was shown during the somewhat free literary debates of the last two years, and even by the intervention of Khrushchev himself, at a conference of architects, against the absurd embellishments and pomposities of Soviet buildings. In the latter case it was the party boss, not the artist, who pronounced judgment, but it seems likely that he expressed opinions prevalent among the architects themselves.

It would be interesting to know whether the younger generation, the children of the self-made State bourgeois, have, like their Victorian prototypes, a broader outlook than their fathers on literature and the arts. The self-made men who rule the Soviet Union today rose to power extremely young after the Yezhov purge. This generation has held the key posts in party, government, and management since then. The figures for the age-composition of delegates to the last two Party Congresses (a category which includes all important officials of the party machine) make this very clear. At the eighteenth Congress in 1939, 81 per cent of delegates were under 40, at the nineteenth Congress in 1952, 23 per cent. The 45–55 age-group of today have been ruling the country for fifteen years. Their children have no hope of succeeding to their positions at the age at which they themselves obtained them. There is at all times and in all countries a conflict between generations. But the rigid structure of the Soviet régime and the utterly different opportunities of the two generations are likely to make this conflict especially acute. It will certainly have its effects on intellectual and cultural life in the broadest sense.

Before 1917 a large part of the radical intelligentsia was preoccupied with the sufferings of the peasantry. Improvement of rural society was its first aim. The new intelligentsia formed in Soviet schools and universities since the mid-1920's has had its face firmly turned towards the towns, where all material progress has been concentrated. Children of peasants who have got a good education have usually been glad to shake the dust of the despised village from their feet. It will be interesting to see whether the new emphasis placed by Khrushchev on agriculture will change this. Technically trained young men and women are being directed to the countryside. It is even intended greatly to improve the supplies and quality of village school-teachers. This will bring hundreds of thousands of members of the intelligentsia into contact with peasants. The encounter will have its consequences for both, and perhaps its surprises for the rulers.

Though the problems of the Soviet intelligentsia today resemble rather those of a 19th century European bourgeoisie than those of the old Russian, or contemporary Asian or African intelligentsia, there is perhaps one important exception. This is the case of the Asian peoples of the Soviet Union. The Soviet régime has given a very large number of Uzbeks, Azerbaidjanis, Buryats, and others a modern education of which they could hardly dream under the Tsars. It would

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be rash to assume that this had made them grateful supporters of Stalinism. The Indian and Indochinese intelligentsias were able to acquire a modern secular education under British and French colonial rule; they owed their skills and knowledge to the colonial power; yet this did not make them exponents of the colonial power's "civilising mission" among their own people—on the contrary they used the talents which they had developed in order to lead their peoples' struggles for independence against the colonial power. No such struggles are visible in Soviet Asia, for the totalitarian system allows no action not initiated by itself, still less any action directed against itself. But this does not mean that the state of mind does not exist.

BOTH the pre-1917 Russian intelligentsia and the intellectual section of the contemporary Soviet State bourgeoisie deserve the attention of all who seek to understand the world today. The history of the former throws light on the revolutionary tensions and movements of Asia and Africa and Latin America. The evolution of the latter may suggest future trends in Eastern Europe and in China. To what extent the habits of mind of the pre-1917 intelligentsia, its more "specifically Russian" features, have survived into the post-Stalin era can hardly even be guessed. The utopian maximalism that was a living faith to the old revolutionaries has become an official lesson, learned at school and ritually repeated throughout life. This does not mean that it does not still mould minds. The traditional contempt for "the bourgeois world," for moderation and compromises is certainly encouraged by official propaganda. The sense of Russia's mission, the belief in the moral superiority of Russians to Westerners, still exists. One sometimes meets, for example, among post-war exiles from the Soviet Union the conviction that the long years of suffering under Bolshevism place the Russian people in a higher spiritual category than those who have lived a quiet and sordidly comfortable life beyond the Rhine or the Atlantic. On the other hand, social development is creating bourgeois values, whether or not Soviet thinkers themselves recognise this. The old cleavage between dogmatic thinking and quantitative thinking, between realism and maximalism, which marked Russian history between 1861 and 1917, may be reappearing in a different form.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Polanyi

From Copernicus to Einstein

IN THE Ptolemaic system, and in the cosmogony of the Bible, man was assigned a central position in the universe from which he was ousted by Copernicus. Ever since, writers eager to drive the lesson home have urged us, resolutely and repeatedly, to abandon all sentimental egoism, and to see ourselves objectively in the true perspective of time and space. What precisely does this mean? Imagine a full "main feature" film, recapitulating faithfully the history of the universe: the rise of human beings from the first beginnings of man to the achievements of the 20th century would be covered in it by a single second. Alternatively, if we decided to examine the universe "objectively" in the sense of paying equal attention to portions of equal mass, this would result in a lifelong preoccupation with interstellar dust, relieved only at brief intervals by a survey of incandescent masses of hydrogen—not in a thousand million lifetimes would the turn come for giving man even a second's notice.

It goes without saying that no one—scientists included—looks at the universe this way, whatever lip-service is given to "objectivity." Nor should this surprise us. For as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse; so that any attempt rigorously to eliminate our human evaluation from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity.

What is the true lesson of the Copernican revolution? Why did Copernicus exchange his actual terrestrial station for an imaginary solar standpoint? The only justification for this lay in the greater intellectual satisfaction he derived from the celestial panorama as seen from the sun instead of the earth. Copernicus gave preference to man's delight in abstract theory, at the price of rejecting the evidence of our senses which present us with the irresistible fact of the sun, the moon, and the stars rising daily in the east to travel across the sky towards their setting in the west. In a literal sense, therefore, the new Copernican system was as anthropocentric as the Ptolemaic view, the difference being merely that it preferred to satisfy a different human inclination.

It becomes legitimate to regard the Copernican system as more "objective" than the Ptolemaic only if we accept this very shift in the nature of intellectual satisfaction as the criterion of greater objectivity. This

---

The death of Albert Einstein coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of his discovery of the Special Theory of Relativity. During that half-century, the meaning of this discovery has been enveloped in a new mythology about the nature of scientific method. In this essay, Professor Polanyi analyses this mythology and makes some suggestions about the role of personal vision in scientific discovery.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would imply that, of two forms of knowledge, we should consider as more objective that which relies to a greater measure on theory instead of on more immediate sensory evidence. So that, the theory being placed like a screen between our senses and the things of which our senses otherwise would gain a more immediate impression, we would rely increasingly on theoretical guidance for the interpretation of our experience, and would correspondingly reduce the status of our raw impressions to that of dubious or altogether misleading appearances.

It seems to me that we have sound reasons for thus considering theoretical knowledge as more objective than immediate experience. A theory is something other than myself. It may be set out on paper as a system of rules, and it is the more truly a theory the more completely it can be put down in such terms. Mathematical theory reaches the highest perfection in this respect. But even a geographical map fully embodies in itself a set of strict rules for finding one's way through a region of otherwise uncharted experience. Indeed, all theory may be regarded as a kind of map extended over space and time. It seems obvious that a map can be correct or mistaken, so that to the extent to which I have relied on my map I shall attribute to it any mistakes that I made by doing so. A theory on which I rely is therefore objective knowledge in so far as it is not I, but the theory, which is proved right or wrong when I use such knowledge.

I can smell onions, have a headache, or feel humiliated: all these are states of consciousness; but my theory cannot be in any of these states; it exists like a stick or a stone, without any consciousness. Hence a theory cannot be led astray by illusions. To find my way by a map I must perform the conscious act of map-reading and may be deluded in the process, but the map cannot be deluded and remains right or wrong in itself, impersonally. Consequently, a theory on which I rely has a rigid formal structure, on the operation of which I can depend whatever mood or desire may possess me.

Since the formal affirmations of a theory are unaffected by the state of the persons accepting it, theories may be constructed without regard to our normal approach to experience. Here is a third reason why the Copernican system, being more theoretical than the Ptolemaic, is also more objective. Since its picture of the solar system disregards our terrestrial location it may claim equal interest to the inhabitants of Mars, Venus, or Neptune, and will likewise commend itself to them—provided that they share our intellectual values.

Thus, when we claim greater objectivity for the Copernican theory we do imply that its excellence is, not a matter of personal taste on our part, but an inherent quality of it deserving universal acceptance by rational creatures. We abandon the cruder anthropocentrism of our senses—but only in favour of a more ambitious anthropocentrism of our reason.

ACTUALLY, the theory that the planets move round the sun was to speak for itself in a fashion that went far beyond asserting its own inherent rationality. It was to speak to Kepler (sixty-six years after the death of Copernicus) and inspire his discovery of the elliptic path of planets and of their constant angular surface velocity, and to inspire again, ten years later, his discovery of the Third Law of planetary motion, relating orbital distances to orbital periods. And, another sixty-eight years later, Newton was to announce to the world that these laws were but an expression of the underlying fact of general gravitation. All these consequences were partially anticipated by Copernicus in the act of discovering the superior rationality of the heliocentric system.

Thus the intellectual satisfaction which the system originally provided, and which gained acceptance for it, proved to be the token of a deeper significance unknown to its originator. Unknown but not entirely unsuspected; for those who wholeheartedly embraced the Copernican system at an early stage (as did Galileo) committed themselves thereby to the expectation of an indefinite range of possible future confirmations of the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theory, and this expectation was essential to their belief in the objective validity of the system.

One may say, indeed, quite generally that a theory which we acclaim as rational in itself is thereby accredited with prophetic powers. We accept it in the hope of making contact with reality; so that, being really true, our theory may yet show forth its truth through future centuries in ways undreamed of by its authors. Some of the greatest scientific discoveries of our age have been rightly described as the amazing confirmations of accepted scientific theories. In this wholly indeterminate scope of its true implications lies the deepest sense in which objectivity is attributed to a scientific theory.

Here, then, are the true characteristics of objectivity as exemplified by the Copernican theory. We see that objectivity does not demand that we estimate man's significance in the universe by the minute size of his body, the brevity of his past history or his probable future career. It does not require that we see ourselves as a mere grain of sand in a million Saharas. It inspires us, on the contrary, with the hope of overcoming the appalling disabilities of our bodily existence, even to the point of conceiving a rational idea of the universe which can authoritatively speak for itself. It is not a counsel of self-effacement but the very reverse—a call to the Pygmalion in the mind of man.

This is not what we are taught today. To say that the discovery of objective truth in science consists in the apprehension of a rationality which commands our respect and arouses our contemplative admiration; that such discovery, while using the experience of our senses as clues, transcends experience by embracing the vision of a reality beyond the impression of our senses, a vision which speaks for itself in guiding us to an ever deeper understanding of reality—such an account of scientific procedure would be shrugged aside as out-dated Platonism: mystery-mongering, unworthy of an enlightened age.

Yet it is precisely on this conception of objectivity that I wish to insist here. I want to show how scientific theory came to be reduced in the modern mind to the rank of a convenient contrivance, a device for recording events and computing their future course, and then to suggest that 20th century physics, and Einstein's discovery of relativity in particular, which are usually regarded as the fruits and illustrations of this positivistic conception of science, demonstrate on the contrary the power of science to make contact with reality in nature by recognising what is rational in it.

To show this, I have first to go back to a previous stage of science which begins long before Copernicus, though it leads straight up to him. It starts with Pythagoras who lived a century before Socrates. Even so, Pythagoras was a late-comer in science, for the scientific movement was started almost a generation earlier on rather different lines by the Ionian school of Thales. Pythagoras and his followers did not, like the Ionians, try to describe the universe in terms of certain material elements, but interpreted it exclusively in terms of numbers. They took numbers to be the ultimate substance, as well as the form, of things and processes. When sounding an octave they could hear the simple numerical ratio of 1:2 in the harmonious chiming of the sounds from two wires whose lengths had the ratio 1:2. Thus, acoustics made the perfection of simple numerical relations audible to their ear. They turned their eyes towards the heavens and saw the perfect circle of the sun and moon; they watched the diurnal rotation of the firmament and, studying the planets, saw them governed by a complex system of steady circular motions; and they apprehended these celestial perfections in the way one listens to a pure musical interval. They listened to the music of the spheres in a state of mystic communion.

The revival of astronomical theory by Copernicus after two millennia was a conscious return to the Pythagorean tradition. While studying law in Bologna he worked with the professor of astronomy, Novara, a leading Platonist who taught that the uni-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

verse was to be conceived in terms of simple mathematical relationships. Then, on his return to Cracow, with the thought of a heliocentric system in his mind, he made a further study of the philosophers and traced his new conception of the universe back to writers of antiquity standing in the Pythagorean tradition. He, and after him Kepler, continued wholeheartedly the Pythagorean quest for harmonious numbers and geometrical excellence.

In the volume containing the first statement of his Third Law, we can see Kepler speculating intensely on the way the sun, which is the centre of the cosmos and therefore somehow *nous* (Reason) itself, apprehends the celestial music performed by the planets: "Of what sort vision is in the sun, what are its eyes, or what other impulse it has . . . even without eyes . . . for judging the harmonies of the [celestial] motions," it would be "for those inhabiting the earth, not easy to conjecture"—yet one may at least dream, "lulled by the changing harmony of the band of planets," that "in the sun there dwells an intellect simple, intellectual fire or mind, whatever it may be, the fountain of all harmony." He went so far as to write down the tune of each planet in musical notation.

To Kepler astronomic discovery was ecstatic communion, as he voiced it in a famous passage of the same work:

> What I prophesied two-and-twenty years ago, as soon as I discovered the five solids among the heavenly orbits—what I firmly believed long before I had seen Ptolemy's Harmonics—what I had promised my friends in the title of this fifth book, which I named before I was sure of my discovery—what sixteen years ago I urged to be sought—that for which I have devoted the best part of my life to astronomical contemplations, for which I joined Tycho Brahe . . . at last I have brought it to light, and recognised its truth beyond all my hopes. . . . So now since eighteen months ago the dawn, three months ago the proper light of day, and indeed a very few days ago the pure Sun itself of the most marvellous contemplation has shone forth—nothing holds me; I will indulge my sacred fury; I will taunt mankind with the candid confession that I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians, in order to build of them a tabernacle to my God, far indeed from the bounds of Egypt. If you forgive me, I shall rejoice; if you are angry, I shall bear it; the die is cast, the book is written, whether to be read now or by posterity I care not: it may wait a hundred years for its reader, if God himself has waited six thousand years for a man to contemplate His work.

What Kepler claimed here about the Platonic bodies was nonsense, and his exclamation about God's having waited for him for thousands of years sounds fanciful; yet his outburst conveys a true idea of the scientific method and of the nature of science; an idea which has since been disfigured and lost by the sustained attempt to remodel it in the likeness of a mistaken ideal of objectivity.

PASSING from Kepler to Galileo we see the transition to a dynamics in which for the first time numbers enter as measured quantities into mathematical formulæ. But with Galileo this usage still applies only to terrestrial events, while in respect to heavenly motions he still holds the Pythagorean view that the book of nature is written in geometrical characters. In *The Two Great Systems of the World* (1632), he argues in the Pythagorean tradition from the principle that the parts of the world are perfectly ordered. He still believes that the motion of the heavenly bodies—in fact all natural motion as such—must be circular. Rectilinear motion implies change of place, and this can occur only from disorder to order: that is, either in the transition from primeval chaos to the right disposition of the parts of the world, or in violent motion, i.e. in the endeavour of a body artificially moved to return to its "natural" place. Once the world order is established, all bodies are "naturally" at rest or in circular motion. Uniform motion along a straight line, on which Galileo himself founded modern dynamics, appears only in the interstices of a Pythagorean universe.

Thus the first century after the death of Copernicus was inspired by Pythagorean intimations. Their last great manifestation was perhaps Descartes' universal mathematics: his hope of establishing scientific theories by the apprehension of clear and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distinct ideas, which as such were necessarily true.

But a different line of approach was already advancing gradually, stemming from the other line of Greek thought, which lacked the mysticism of Pythagoras, and which recorded observations of all kinds of things, however imperfect. This school derived from the Ionian philosophers culminated in Democritus, a contemporary of Socrates, who first taught men to think in materialistic terms. He laid down the principle: "By convention sweet, by convention bitter, by convention cold, by convention hot, by convention coloured; in reality only atoms and the void." With this Galileo himself agreed; the mechanical properties of things alone were primary (in Locke's terminology), their other properties were derivative, or secondary. Eventually it would appear that the primary qualities of such a universe could be brought under intellectual control by applying Newtonian mechanics to the motions of matter, while its secondary qualities could be derived from this underlying primary reality. Thus emerged the mechanistic conception of the world which prevailed virtually unchanged till the end of the last century.

This was also a theoretical and objective view in the sense of replacing the evidence of our senses by a formal space-time map that predicted the motions of the material particles which were supposed to underly all sensual experience. Yet there is a definite change from the Pythagorean to the Ionian conception of theoretical knowledge. Theory no longer reveals perfection; it no longer contemplates the harmonies of Creation. Numbers and geometrical forms are no longer assumed to be inherent as such in Nature. In Newtonian mechanics the formulæ governing the mechanical substratum of the universe were differential equations containing no numerical rules and exhibiting no geometrical symmetry. Henceforth "pure" mathematics became strictly separated from the *application* of mathematics to the formulation of empirical laws. Geometry became the science of empty space; and analysis, affiliated since Descartes to geometry, seceded with it into the region beyond experience. Mathematics represented all rational knowledge which appeared necessarily true; while the events of the world were seen as contingent—that is merely such as happened to be the case.

The separation of reason and experience was pressed further by the discovery of non-Euclidian geometry. Mathematics was thereafter denied the capacity of stating anything beyond sets of tautologies formulated within a conventional framework of notations. A new positivist philosophy arose, denying to the scientific theories of physics any claim to inherent rationality, a claim which it condemned as metaphysical and mystical. The earliest, most energetic and influential development of his idea was due to Ernst Mach, who by his book, *Die Mechanik*, published in 1883, founded the Viennese school of positivism. Scientific theory, according to Mach, is merely a convenient summary of experience. Its purpose is to save time and trouble in recording observations. It is the most economical adaptation of thought to facts, and just as external to the facts as a map, a timetable, or a telephone directory; indeed this conception of scientific theory would include a timetable or a telephone directory among scientific theories.

Accordingly, scientific theory was denied all persuasive power that is intrinsic to itself. It must not go beyond experience by affirming anything that cannot be tested by experience; and above all, scientists must be prepared immediately to drop a theory the moment an observation turns up which conflicts with it. In so far as a theory cannot be tested by experience—or appears not capable of being so tested—it ought to be revised so that its predictions are restricted to observable magnitudes.

THIS view, which can be traced back to Locke and Hume and which in its massive modern absurdity has almost entirely dominated 20th century thinking on science, seems to be the inevitable consequence of separating, in principle, mathematical knowledge from empirical knowledge. I shall now

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proceed to the story of relativity, which is supposed to have brilliantly confirmed this view of science, and shall show why in my opinion it has supplied on the contrary some striking evidence for its refutation.

The story of relativity is a complicated one, owing to the currency of a number of historical fictions. The first of these can be found in every textbook of physics. It tells you that relativity was conceived by Einstein in 1905 in order to account for the negative result of the Michelson-Morley experiment, carried out in Cleveland eighteen years earlier, in 1887. Michelson and Morley are alleged to have found that the speed of light measured by a terrestrial observer was the same in whatever direction the signal was sent out. That was surprising, for one would have expected that the observer would catch up to some extent with signals sent out in the direction in which the earth was moving, so that the speed would appear slower in this direction, while the observer would move away from the signal sent out in the opposite direction so that the speed would then appear faster.

The experiment is supposed to have shown no trace of such an effect due to terrestrial motion, and so—the textbook story goes on—Einstein undertook to account for this by a new conception of space and time, according to which we could expect invariably to observe the same value for the speed of light, whether we are at rest or in motion. So Newtonian space, which is "necessarily at rest without reference to any external object," and the corresponding distinction between bodies in absolute motion and bodies at absolute rest, were abandoned and a framework set up in which only the relative motion of bodies could be expressed.

But the historical facts are different. Einstein had speculated already as a schoolboy, at the age of sixteen, on the curious consequences that would occur if an observer pursued and kept pace with a light signal sent out by him. His autobiography reveals that he discovered relativity

> after ten years reflection . . . from a paradox upon which I had already hit at the age of sixteen: If I pursue a beam of light with the velocity c (velocity of light in a vacuum), I should observe such a beam of light as a spatially oscillatory electromagnetic field at rest. However, there seems to be no such thing, whether on the basis of experience or according to Maxwell's equations. From the very beginning it appeared to me intuitively clear that, judged from the standpoint of such an observer, everything would have to happen according to the same laws as for an observer who, relative to the earth, was at rest.

There is no mention here of the Michelson-Morley experiment; its findings were, on the basis of pure speculation, rationally intuited by Einstein before he had ever heard about it. To make sure of this, I addressed an enquiry to the late Professor Einstein who confirmed the fact that "the Michelson-Morley experiment had a negligible effect on the discovery of relativity."

Actually, Einstein's original paper announcing the Special Theory of Relativity (1905) gave little grounds for the current misconception concerning the origins of his discovery. It opens with a long paragraph referring to the anomalies in the electrodynamics of moving media, mentioning in particular the lack of symmetry in its treatment, on the one hand, of a wire with current flowing through it moving relative to a magnet at rest, and on the other of a magnet moving relative to the same electric current at rest. It then goes on to say that "similar examples, as well as the unsuccessful attempts to observe the relative motion of the earth in respect to the medium of light lead to the conjecture that, as in mechanics, so also in electrodynamics, absolute rest is not observable. . . ."

The usual textbook account of relativity as a theoretical response to the Michelson-Morley experiment is an invention. It is the product of prejudice, exactly on a par, for example, with the notion customary among primitive people, that hostile witchcraft may be assumed to account for someone's violent death. Even as the native refuses to accept the possibility of accidental death, the modern positivist refuses to acknowledge man's inherent power to discover rationality in nature, and when his prejudices come in

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conflict with experience, the positivist—like the savage—automatically supplements experience from the resources of his imagination. So when Einstein discovered rationality in nature, unaided by any observation that had not been available for at least fifty years before, our textbooks promptly covered up the scandal by an appropriately embellished account of his discovery.

THERE is an aspect of this story that is even more curious. For the programme which Einstein carried out was largely prefigured by the very positivist conception of science which his own achievement so flagrantly refuted. It was formulated explicitly by Ernst Mach, who, as we have seen, had first advanced the conception of science as a timetable or telephone directory. He had extensively criticised Newton's definition of space and absolute rest on the grounds that it said nothing that could be tested by experience. He condemned this as dogmatic, since it went beyond experience, and as *meaningless*, since it pointed to nothing that could conceivably be tested by experience. Mach urged that Newtonian dynamics should be reformulated so as to avoid referring to any movement of bodies except as the relative motion of bodies with respect to each other, and Einstein acknowledged the "profound influence" which Mach's book exercised on him as a boy and subsequently on his discovery of relativity.

Yet if Mach had been right in saying that Newton's conception of space as absolute rest was meaningless—because it said nothing that could be proven true or false—then Einstein's rejection of Newtonian space could have made no difference to what we hold to be true or false. It could not have led to the discovery of any new facts. Actually, Mach was quite wrong: he forgot about the propagation of light and did not realise that in this connection Newton's conception of space was far from untestable. Einstein, who realised this, showed that the Newtonian conception of space was not *meaningless* but *false*.

Mach's great merit lay in possessing an intimation of the mechanical universe in which Newton's assumption of a single point at absolute rest was eliminated. His was a super-Copernican vision, totally at variance with our habitual experience. Remember that every object we perceive is set off by us instinctively against a background which is taken to be at rest. To set aside this urge of our senses, which Newton had embodied in his axiom of an "absolute space" said to be "inscrutable and immovable," was a tremendous step towards a theory grounded in reason and transcending the senses. Its power lay precisely in that appeal to rationality which Mach wished to eliminate from the foundations of science. No wonder therefore that he advanced it on false grounds, attacking Newton for making an empty statement and overlooking the fact that—far from being empty—the statement was false. Thus Mach prefigured the great theoretic vision of Einstein, sensing its inherent rationality, even while trying to exorcise the very capacity of the human mind by which he gained this insight.

BUT there yet remains an almost ludicrous part of the story to be told. The Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887, which Einstein mentions in support of his theory and which the textbooks have since enshrined as the crucial evidence which compelled him to formulate it, actually did not give the result required by relativity! It admittedly substantiated its authors' claim that the relative motion of the earth and the "ether" did not exceed a quarter of the earth's orbital velocity. But the actually observed effect was not negligible; or has, at any rate, not been proved negligible up to this day. The presence of a positive effect in the observations of Michelson and Morley was pointed out first by W. M. Hicks in 1902 and was later evaluated by D. C. Miller as corresponding to an "ether-drift" of eight to nine kilometres per second. Moreover, an effect of the same magnitude was reproduced by D. C. Miller and his collaborators in a long series of experiments extending from 1902 to 1926, in which they repeated the Michelson-Morley experiment with new, more accurate apparatus, many thousands of times.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The layman, taught to revere scientists for their absolute respect for the observed facts, and for the judiciously detached and purely provisional manner in which they hold scientific theories (always ready to abandon a theory at the sight of any contradictory evidence), might well have thought that, at Miller's announcement of this overwhelming evidence of "a positive effect" in his presidential address to the American Physical Society on December 29th, 1925, his audience would have instantly abandoned the theory of relativity. Or, at the very least, that scientists —wont to look down from the pinnacle of their intellectual humility upon the rest of dogmatic mankind—might suspend judgement in this matter until Miller's results could be accounted for without impairing the theory of relativity. But no; by this time they had so well closed their minds to any suggestion which threatened the new rationality achieved by Einstein's world-picture that it was almost impossible for them to think again in different terms. Little attention was paid to the experiments; the evidence being set aside, in the hope that it would one day turn out to be wrong.*

The experience of D. C. Miller demonstrates quite plainly the hollowness of the assertion that science is simply based on experiments which anybody can repeat at will. It shows that any critical verification of a scientific statement requires the same powers for recognising rationality in nature as does the process of scientific discovery, even though it exercises these at a lower level. When philosophers analyse the verification of scientific laws, they invariably choose as specimens those which are not in doubt, and thus inevitably overlook the intervention of these powers; for they are describing only the practical demonstration of a scientific law, and not its critical verification. As a result we are given an account of scientific method which, having left out the process of discovery on the grounds that it follows no definite method, overlooks the process of verification, by referring only to examples where no real verification takes place.

At the time that Miller announced his results, relativity had yet made few predictions that could be confirmed by experiment. Its empirical support lay mainly in a number of already known observations. The account which the new theory gave of these known phenomena was considered as rational, since it derived them from one single convincingly rational principle. It was the same as when Newton's comprehensive account of Kepler's Three Laws, of the moon's period, and of terrestrial gravitation—in terms of a general theory of universal gravitation—was immediately given a position of surpassing authority, even before any predictions had been deduced from it. It was this inherent rational excellence of relativity which moved Max Born, despite the strong empirical emphasis of his account of science, to salute as early as 1920 "the grandeur, the boldness, and the directness of the thought" of relativity, which made the world-picture of science "more beautiful and grander."

Since then the passing years have brought wide and precise confirmation of at least one formula of relativity; probably the only formula ever sent sprawling across the cover of *Time* magazine. The reduction of mass (m) by the loss of energy (e) accompanying nuclear transformation has been repeatedly shown to confirm the now famous equation $e = mc^2$, where c is the velocity of light. But such verifications of relativity are but confirmations of the earlier judgement of Einstein and his followers, who committed themselves to the theory long before these verifications. And they are an even more

* It is true that in the subsequent years experiments by Kennedy; Illingworth; Michelson, Pease and Pearson, conducted by different methods gave essentially null results, but the original Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887 and its innumerable repetitions by D. C. Miller remained and still remain unaccounted for. While desultory attempts to resolve this anomaly continue to be made up to this day, it has never affected the standard textbook accounts of the Michelson-Morley experiment or disturbed in the least the continued teaching of the story of its decisive effect on the discovery of relativity. Still less has it discouraged so far the philosophy of science fostered by this myth; a myth which is itself an emanation of this philosophy.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remarkable justification of the earlier strivings of Ernst Mach for a more rational foundation of mechanics, setting out a programme for relativity at a time when no avenues could yet be seen towards this objective.

THE beauty and power inherent in the rationality of contemporary physics is, as I have said, of a novel kind. When classical physics first superseded the Pythagorean tradition, mathematical theory was reduced to an instrument for computing the mechanical motions which were supposed to underlie all natural phenomena. Geometry also stood outside nature, claiming to offer an *a priori* analysis of Euclidean space, which was regarded as the scene of all natural phenomena but not thought to be involved in them. Relativity, and subsequently quantum mechanics and modern physics generally, have moved back towards a mathematical conception of reality. Essential features of the theory of relativity were anticipated as mathematical problems by Riemann in his development of non-Euclidean geometry; while its further elaboration relied on the powers of the hitherto purely speculative tensor calculus, which by a fortunate accident Einstein got to know from a mathematician in Zürich. Similarly, Max Born happened to find the matrix calculus ready to hand for the development of Heisenberg's quantum mechanics, which could otherwise never have reached concrete conclusions. These examples could be multiplied. By them, modern physics has demonstrated the power of the human mind to discover and exhibit a rationality which governs nature, before ever approaching the field of experience in which previously discovered mathematical harmonies were to be revealed as empirical facts.

Thus relativity has restored, up to a point, the blend of geometry and physics which Pythagorean thought had first naïvely taken for granted. We now realise that Euclidean geometry, which until the advent of general relativity was taken to represent experience correctly, referred only to comparatively superficial aspects of physical reality. It gave an idealisation of the metric relations in rigid bodies and elaborated these exhaustively, while ignoring entirely the masses of the bodies and the forces acting on them. The opportunity to expand geometry so as to include the laws of dynamics was offered by its generalisation into many-dimensional and non-Euclidean space and this was accomplished by work in pure mathematics, before any empirical investigation could even be imagined. The first step was taken by Minkowski in 1908 by presenting a geometry which expressed the special theory of relativity, and which included classical dynamics as a limiting case. The laws of physical dynamics now appeared as geometrical theorems of a four-dimensional non-Euclidean space. Subsequent investigations by Einstein led, by a further generalisation of this type of geometry, to the general theory of relativity, its postulates being so chosen as to produce invariant expressions with regard to all frames of reference assumed to be physically equivalent. As a result of these postulates, the trajectories of masses follow geodetics, and light is propagated along zero lines. When the laws of physics thus appear as particular instances of geometrical theorems, we may infer that the confidence placed in physical theory owes much to its possessing the same kind of excellence from which pure geometry and pure mathematics in general derive their interest, and for the sake of which they are cultivated.

We cannot truly account for our acceptance of such theories without endorsing our acknowledgement of a beauty that exhilarates and a profundity that entrances us. Yet the prevailing conception of science, based on the disjunction of subjectivity and objectivity, seeks—and must seek at all costs—to eliminate such emotional appraisals of theories from science, or at least to minimise their function to that of a negligible by-play. For modern man has set up as the ideal of knowledge the conception of natural science as a set of statements which is "objective" in the sense that their substance is entirely determined by observation, even while their presentation may be shaped by convention. This conception, stemming from a craving

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rooted in the very core of our culture, would be shattered if the assessment of rationality in nature had to be acknowledged as a justifiable and indeed quite essential part of scientific theory. That is why scientific theory is represented as a mere economical description of facts; or as embodying a conventional policy for drawing empirical inferences; or as a working hypothesis, suited to man's practical convenience: interpretations which all deliberately overlook the rational core of science.

THAT is why also, if the existence of this rational core yet reasserts itself, its offensiveness is covered up by a set of euphemisms, a kind of decent understatement like that used in Victorian times when legs were called limbs; a bowdlerisation which we may observe, for example, in the attempts to replace "rationality" by "simplicity." It is legitimate, of course, to regard simplicity *as a mark* of rationality, and to pay tribute to any theory as a triumph of simplicity. But great theories are rarely simple in the ordinary sense of the term—both quantum-mechanics and relativity are very difficult to understand: it takes only a few minutes to memorise the facts accounted for by relativity, but years of study may not suffice to master the theory and see these facts in its context. Hermann Weyl lets the cat out of the bag by saying: "the required simplicity is not necessarily the obvious one but we must let nature train us to recognise the true inner simplicity." In other words, simplicity in science can be made equivalent to rationality only if "simplicity" is used in a special sense known solely by scientists. We understand the meaning of the term "simple" only by recalling the meaning of the term "rational" or "reasonable" or "such that we ought to assent to it," which the term "simple" is supposed to replace. The term "simplicity" functions then merely as a disguise for another meaning than its own. It is used for smuggling an essential quality into our appreciation of a scientific theory, which a mistaken conception of objectivity forbids us openly to acknowledge.

What has just been said of "simplicity" applies equally to "symmetry" and "economy." They are contributing elements in the excellence of a theory, but can account for its merit only if the meaning of these terms is stretched far beyond their usual scope so as to include by way of pseudo-substitution the much deeper qualities which make the scientists rejoice in a vision like that of relativity; they must stand for those peculiar intellectual harmonies, which reveal more profoundly and permanently than any sense-experience, the presence of objective truth.

I could go on like this and criticise pragmatism and operationalism in similar terms. For they are but further variants of the same unending effort to eliminate the essential contribution by which the scientist emotionally participates in his knowledge of a scientific theory. The method of these attempts is always essentially the same: namely, to define scientific merit in trivial terms which are then made to function in precisely the same way as the true terms which they are supposed to eliminate. This is what I have called pseudo-substitution; a disingenuous game of playing down man's real and indispensable intellectual powers for the sake of maintaining a set of sterile prejudices.

There are other sections of science which illustrate even more effectively the part played by what might be called personal knowledge in our understanding of nature. Inexact sciences rely heavily on skills and connoisseurship; as does also the appreciation of probability and order in the exact sciences. At all these points science relies on human *appraisal*. The personal appraisal which enters into knowledge denies in a sense the disjunction between subjectivity and objectivity, for it claims that man can transcend his own subjectivity by passionately striving to fulfil his own personal obligations to universal standards. Our endorsement of personal knowledge re-establishes man's responsibility for scientific knowledge on the grounds that our passionate participation in the act of knowing is instrinsic to it, and that it can yet fulfil universal demands.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TABLE TALK

IT IS four years since I saw the *Quatorze Juillet* being celebrated in Paris. The temper in which the great beano is—or is not—enjoyed is a symptom of the health or ill-health of Paris, if not of France. I had seen many Fourteenths, some nearly revolutionary, some symbolically moving like that of 1945. The fact that this Fourteenth was more like the good old days was significant in itself, significant of the internal political *détente* and the increase in well-being that has marked France, like all the West, in recent years. It was also, no doubt, significant of a certain parochialism that the festivities, including the great parade, ignored (of course they had to) the flood of increasingly bad news from North Africa. The Negro cavalry reminded me of the famous Black Guard of the deposed Sultan of Morocco that I had seen nearly thirty years ago. But it was not his guard now. He was deposed and in exile. All the parade of colonial units was in some degree a commemoration of an imperialism for which there was and is more to be said than it is fashionable to admit, but which today is assailed by new forces, new ideas, exposed to new risks, forced to new and difficult transformations. Much of the old French, like the old British, imperialism is as obsolete as are the rifles I saw some of the troops carrying in the age of the H-bomb.

The Fourteenth is the memorial of a liberating military action, of the day

When death was on thy drums democracy
And with one rush of slaves the world was free.

Or was it? It was impossible in reading the slogans, listening to the discourses, the *Marseillaise*, or the *Chant du Départ* to forget that the world of 1789 was less full of Bastilles than is the world of today, that as the author of the lines I have quoted (Chesterton) later wrote, more wisely if less poetically, "the world will never be made safe for democracy, it is a dangerous trade." The great "popular" processions in Paris had had to be banned. They were under the control of a party for whom the Jacobin slogans are mere instruments of war, of civil war. This, of course, is more evident in France than in England, in France where the "martyrdom" of the Rosenbergs is used still to cover up the daily martyrdoms of less publicised victims. No doubt this symbolism is a mere detail of what is a necessary (from the Communist point of view) anti-American campaign. No doubt it is made easier by memories of earlier episodes in American history like the Sacco-Vanzetti case. (A plausible argument could be made for the point of view that the most costly American college president in American history was the late A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard.) But here, in France, the lines are clearly and bitterly drawn. It is not a mere matter of the vegetarian moralism of the English Left. Here it is the head of the governor of the Bastille on a pike, of the *conventional* asking: was the blood of the victims of September so pure? No, the conquests of July 14th, 1789, have to be made over again every day and, perhaps, complacent festivals like this conceal from us the fact that they have not been permanent or effective.

I have sometimes thought that the slowness, not to speak of the notorious abuses, of French criminal justice arise from the belief that all the important questions of the practical guarantees of justice were settled in or around 1789. French parochialism, which is still marked, blinds controversialists on both sides to certain awkward comparative realities. The endless investigation and re-investigation of the Dominici case (I call it that for, significantly, the image of Père Dominici as a scapegoat, if not as a victim, has eclipsed the memory of the Drummonds who were the original victims) shows how much there is to be done before the Declara-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen has full meaning. A magistrate of the old order or a Lieutenant of Police like M. de Sartines could feel quite at home in Paris today. His style would be cramped, but he would not be totally at a loss.

It is not necessary to idealise English justice in its present or past form. The London of the Beggar's Opera was very like the Paris of the Neveu de Rameau. The copper's nark is a feature of police life in all countries. But the Fielding brothers did differ from the Lieutenants of Police in one important respect. They could not produce evidence by legal torture. This forced them and the Bow Street runners to look for evidence, instead of looking for the guilty and then, having decided who it was, asking him by various methods of "persuasion" to come clean. An ingenious friend of mine more than once has pointed out to me that the great English literary invention is not the detective story, but the story in which the hero is the cop, not the robber, not Robin Hood but the Sheriff of Nottingham. That this is so has important consequences, like that widespread admiration for the police which is not confined to American tourists but, Mr. Geoffrey Gorer tells us, is deep in the hearts of the English people. Here, in Paris, I doubt if the arrival of a Communist régime could make the Communist voters of a red suburb really take even to a Party-certified and Party-controlled police force. The traditions of Vidocq and of Inspector Bucket are too different.

BUT British justice, for reasons with which I sympathise, is not in good odour in Paris at the moment. The hanging of Mrs. Ellis, the pompous and unfeeling ritual, the fact that the glass of brandy she was given was not provided by the Government (as it is here) but by an outsider, all gave the French plenty of gratifying distraction from their own troubles and shortcomings. Of course, there is no reason why a woman murderer, even a woman scorned, should be let off with a sympathetic tear. True, there is a literary tradition of which "Frankie and Johnny" is my favourite expression. But murder is murder. Is capital punishment murder? Not, I think, as a general philosophical proposition. The power of life and death (most manifest in war) is a mark, *the* mark of the state. The hangman, if not the keystone of society as Joseph de Maistre argued, is not yet a murderer. But he is, as the French say, ironically using the feudal term, the executioner of the "*hautes œuvres*" of the nation. The men and women who gloat over an execution are not. If the Christian doctrine that lust is as bad as adultery is true, then there have been some murderers, in intent, at large in England in the last week or two. Killing for revenge, directly or vicariously, is murder itself.

The Ellis case bred other reflections. The civil servants of all countries suffer from grievances and from genuine grievances. Many of the charges and slurs made against them are fantastically unjust. The picture of the self-made businessman risking his all and earning the rewards of daring and enterprise is an *image d'Epinal* often as obsolete as the weapons of this July 14th parade. But civil servants should remember that they cannot have it both ways. They cannot claim to be servants of the state without paying a price, as well as reaping a reward, in prestige and power. I don't mean to suggest that the execution of Ruth Ellis should debar a civil servant from grumbling at the expense accounts allowed to businessmen or from dreaming that favourite dream of bureaucrats and dons: that it is only a high sense of public duty that keeps them from making a killing in business and setting up their wives or husbands in the style to which Lady Docker has accustomed us. But they do exercise at various levels a kind of power that not even ICI or Michelin or E. I. Du Pont de Nemours can rival. A friend of mine here has just run against the Administration in the form of a minor bureaucrat putting quite maddening difficulties in the way of her *femme de ménage* getting a passport. It may be wrong and illogical, but we do resent the power of our minor "employees" more than we do that of "*les trusts*," if only because it is a betrayal of the hopes formed on that naïve and optimistic day, July 14th. If there are fewer street balls, it may not be only that the neighbours object to the noise, but that we no longer believe that there is only one Bastille whose taking liberates us all.

D. W. Brogan

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter from AMERICA

36 Million Babies

In 1933, a group of social scientists that had been assembled at the order of President Hoover offered their composite work, *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, to the depression-ridden American public. In retrospect, perhaps the most remarkable contribution to this appraisal of American society was the forecast by Warren Thompson and P. K. Whelpton of the country's future population growth. In 1940, the Bureau of the Census found that its actual count of the population of the United States, before it was corrected for under-enumeration, was less accurate than the estimate these two demographers had made almost a decade before!

Today, demographers look back with nostalgia to this *tour de force*. For, ever since the end of the war, the American birth-rate has undergone a metamorphosis that has left us demographers only slightly less bewildered than the rest of the country. Whereas it was once confidently expected that the population of the United States would stabilise itself at about 175 million, if it did not then decline, it seems certain now that there will be more than 200 million Americans by 1975.

While the extraordinary accuracy of the 1933 prediction was based on moderately difficult statistical manipulations, it was not merely the result of technical adeptness. The plausible hypothesis that demographers had developed to explain what had been happening to the population of the Western world during the past several centuries gave some theoretical substance to their suppositions as to what would happen in the future. This hypothesis was the theory of the demographic cycle.

At the beginning of the modern age, European fertility and mortality were both high. Many babies were born, but most of these died off before they themselves could become parents, so that the population grew slowly. Modernisation brought an increase in the food supply, an improvement in public sanitation, and the discovery of specific cures for one after another of the important diseases. The death-rate fell, and since fathers continued to beget many sons, Europe's population increased very rapidly. Its cities filled up, and some 60 million Europeans overflowed to the Western Hemisphere and Australasia. Then, during the 19th century, fertility also fell, and by the inter-war period of the present century, a family of one or two children was becoming the norm in all Western countries.

When the demographers made their remarkable forecasts, what they did was to extrapolate separately these downward trends in mortality and fertility rates, and to apply them to a population gradually changing in its age structure. During the 1930's, the population of Western countries continued to grow only because an abnormally large proportion still was—temporarily—in the age-group capable of bearing children. The population of the United States was, in the common and ominous phrase, in "incipient decline," and this decline was expected to become actual within a few decades. If the effort of parents to raise their standard of living, to avoid sacrifices in money, time, and worry, had made the third and fourth child a thing of the past, then why not also eventually the first child, which costs its parents the most? A widely-used college textbook on the family was subtitled *From Institution to Companionship*. As Carle Zimmerman of Harvard University put it, "Unless some unforeseen renaissance occurs, the family system will continue headlong its present trend toward nihilism." Spengler's

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decline of the West was spelled out in literal terms.

However one analysed the trend, it certainly seemed in the 1930's that the fall in the American birth-rate had not yet run its course. The small-family system had started in the cities, and the nation was becoming increasingly urbanised. Or: the norm of one or two children had developed first in the middle class, whose standards of behaviour were gradually spreading through the rest of the social structure. Or: the small family had begun among those with the readiest access to contraceptives, and these were becoming more generally available to the whole of the population. Everything seemed to indicate that the larger families still typical of farmers and unskilled workers would soon become only a memory.

The temporary effect of the depression accelerated the long-term decline in fertility, and the result was the lowest birth-rates in American history. It was typical of the apocalyptic mood of the 1930's that these were not only taken as representative of the underlying trend, but were extrapolated to their disastrous culmination. The post-war baby boom, when it came, was totally unexpected, and to this day no one pretends to be able to explain it very satisfactorily.

DEMOGRAPHERS believed at first that the sharp increase in the birth-rate was due merely, or primarily, to a bunching of the births postponed during the lean years of the depression. It was soon clear, however, that the baby boom represented a genuine reversal of the prior trend: the average number of children per American family, on the decrease since the beginning of the 19th century, has been getting larger for the past ten years. The number of third and fourth children was still rising in 1950, the last year for which such details are now available. A portion of the baby boom doubtless was a temporary spurt occasioned by the large number of post-war marriages and the soldiers' return to their wives. But a sizable proportion was also the effect of the desire of the average American parents for more children.

In 1954, a record of 4·06 million births were recorded, and during the decade ending that year the boom in births had added 36·75 million babies to the American population. During these same ten years, moreover, infant mortality in the United States declined by about a third, so that the net effect of this astounding rise in fertility was greater than it would have been before the war.

By now, those who maintain that the post-war rise in fertility is only a temporary interruption in the long-term decline have become a bit defensive. As Frank Notestein put it in a recent article in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association:*

> We are now in the position of speaking of a secular decline in fertility in spite of a fifteen-year period of rising birth-rates. Our critics are asking how many years it takes to make a trend, and implying that demographers form an élite corps of double-distilled false prophets—that is, prophets who, being proved wrong, insist on staying that way.

After this débâcle, demographers no longer place much faith in mere statistical extrapolations. The important thing is not the statistical trend itself, which may be temporary and misleading, but the vaguer, broad social changes underlying it. Professor Notestein believes that the forces in American society that led to the small-family system must reassert their dominance, if not today then tomorrow. I would like to suggest that, on the contrary, the larger American family is developing a new institutional framework in which it can be more than a temporary aberration from the theoretical long-run trend.

WHAT changes have taken place in "the American pattern of life" that might help stabilise a family of about three children? Several trends can be observed that seem suggestive:

(1) THERE is first, and most obviously, the transformation from the depression decade to the post-war boom. The buoyancy of the American economy has taken the advocates of full employment by surprise: Henry Wallace's slogan of "Sixty Million Jobs" is as politically anachronistic as its author. That the expected unemployment failed to develop does not mean, of course, that the present boom will continue; it means only that economists' forecasts are as fallible as demographers'. But even if the worst should come to pass, and the United States should go through another major depression, the effect of this on the birth-rate could not be predicted with any assurance. While it is

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

true that, to some degree, parents choose between having a child and alternative ways of spending the money it would cost, a parent's role cannot be adequately contained within the simplified confines of Economic Man. The depression of the 1930's helped reduce the birth-rate, but only because it acted in conjunction with other forces. The fact that the wealthiest couples typically had the smallest families, and that men on work-relief had the largest, should warn us against a narrowly economic interpretation of fertility trends.

Actually, the causal relation works more clearly in the opposite direction. With an economy at the American level of technology, the principal economic danger is not a lack of goods but rather a lack of investment opportunities. By a curious paradox, the larger American family, though it may entail a monetary sacrifice on the part of the individual parents, tends to balance this out in social terms; for the millions of new citizens each year establish a demand for new homes, factories, and other capital equipment. In the United States today, a Malthusian analysis is not only inexact but close to the contrary of the actual relation between population growth and economic abundance.

(2) The most significant increases in fertility have been among those social groups that had previously shown the greatest decline—urban as against rural, professional or managerial as against farm or unskilled workers, college-educated as against grammar school only. It has often been remarked that the American working class has no ideological independence: every worker is a businessman *manqué*. There is enough truth in this aphorism to have warranted the recurrent observation that the example of the small middle-class family was an important influence in reducing the fertility of other social classes. Today, however, the middle class sets a different example. The fertility of the classes with the largest families is still declining, and that of the classes with the smallest pre-war families is rising, so that these two are now both approaching a national norm of something like a three-child family.

(3) The "new look" in family size has some of the irrationality of any change in style, but it has also been motivated by the deepest aspirations of the American middle class. With a certain exaggeration, the United States can be termed the country of upward mobility. The behaviour patterns of the typical American, to the extent that such a person exists, can probably be best defined in terms of the hopes and expectations excited by "the American promise" of a happier life. In the past, middle-class parents regarded it as their duty to offer the maximum advantages to a very small number of children; and this value was certainly an important reason for the spread of the small-family system. Today, however, the psychologists' dictum that the single child is more likely to be "neurotic" has been spread through women's magazines to become a commonplace of middle-class lore. Whether this is true or not is beside the point; the theory, even if spurious, has been widely enough accepted to affect present attitudes and behaviour. If one has children at all, one must —for their sake—have at least two, and preferably at least three. The fact that the new trend in family size has been based on a re-interpretation of the parents' duty, rather than on an attempt to reject it, indicates a greater likelihood of permanence.

(4) The small family of the recent past was, one might say, built into the small city apartment, which made an additional child an expensive and bothersome undertaking. Post-war building has been principally of a new type, which lacks even the words to describe it. The old census classification of "rural non-farm" is clearly inappropriate, as is also the more usual term of "suburban," with its connotations of the upper-class cocktail set. Sociologists have coined neologisms like "urban fringe" or "rurban" to denote this new phenomenon, but these have not yet become general. Whatever one calls it, the New Suburb is setting the pattern of American life; the three- or four-bedroom homes are designed for children. During the ten years from 1940 to 1950, the population of the urban fringe grew three and a half times faster than the central portions of metropolitan districts, and this differential growth has probably accelerated since the last census.

The typical suburb of the 1920's was the upper-class dormitory of a large city—Long Island or Westchester for New York, the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

North Shore for Chicago. Clustered as close as possible to these were middle-class settlements, invariably named something as genteel as "Garden Park Manor." Today, suburban living is not restricted to the real or the would-be wealthy. The miles on miles of identical mass-produced dwellings hold lower-middle-class and working-class families even when they are new; and after they age a bit, they will become the lower-class tenements of tomorrow.

What is the character of the family in these surroundings? In the New Suburbs, hardly anyone rents a house; and home ownership, which increased by one half between 1940 and 1950, has always been correlated with large families. In the New Suburb, the home is apparently becoming the focus of a more meaningful family life, so that it may not be so pertinent any longer to speak of the family's loss of function. If the wife works, as she often does, it is not ordinarily in order to establish a career independent of her role as wife and mother, but in order to round out the family income by supplementing her husband's salary or wage. If the man is usually away at work during the day, he spends evenings and weekends with his family; the do-it-yourself craze that has spread through American surburbia is a mode of classifying the continuous extension and decoration of one's home as "fun." When details of this kind are added up, the sum is a milieu in which a childless couple feels out of place.

THESE arguments that a middle-sized family is becoming the American norm are frankly speculative. But about the effects of the post-war baby boom we can be much more certain. Under any circumstances, the high birth-rate will continue during the next generation, even if a family of one or two children again becomes the norm: the rate of population increase will remain high because of all of the future parents now being born. More than 96 per cent of those born during the 1940's will survive to the age of 21, which is now the median age at marriage for women. By the current pattern, these women will have about half the number of children they bear before they are 26. With the age at marriage as low as it has become, generations have become very short, so that the style in family size must reverse itself rather quickly if the post-war baby boom is not to become the beginning of a cumulative increase.

In any case, no matter what happens to the birth-rate, 36 million babies have been born during the past decade. Barring a national calamity on the scale of an atomic war, the vast majority of these will grow to maturity. As these move up into adult life, they will disrupt, one after the other, institutions built to accommodate more modest numbers.

The public school system is already bursting, and college enrolments will also swell to much larger numbers than can be adequately accommodated. A college education is now on its way to becoming the norm: in 1954, the total student body in the colleges increased by one tenth over the preceding year —and this in spite of the fact that the entering freshmen, born in 1937, represented the smallest cohort of 17-year-olds that this country will see in many decades. The number of boys and girls of college age will grow enormously in the next years, and the proportion of these that will want to matriculate will apparently also continue to increase. One estimate puts the college population of the United States in 1975 at about 10 million: the consequences for scholastic standards are incalculable but ominous.

The post-war revival of the birth-rate will directly affect the labour market only when the "boom babies" start to reach working age; and some of its other effects on the national economy have also been postponed. Since capital investments are made less in response to current conditions than to expectations of the future, entrepreneurs have been more influenced by expert opinion than by the actual growth of the population. In 1939, in what became a very famous address, Professor Alvin Hansen predicted that the population of the United States would increase by about five to six million over the following decade; the actual increase was almost *four* times that. In 1946, the Bureau of the Census forecast an increase of 4·6 million over the next five years; the actual growth was *double* that. It is only during the last few years that population forecasts have become more reasonable—and that businessmen have come to discount all such forecasts as a reasonable basis for new investment. As a result of this lag, the $40 billion per year that the United States is now investing in capital goods may not suffice to furnish the growing population

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the increasing living standard that Americans demand as their right.

That is, at least, what an unorthodox economist like Peter Drucker tells us; and he makes a good case for his point of view. In spite of the extraordinarily rapid growth in population, the United States faces a labour shortage. Young men of 21, now entering the labour market, were born in 1934, which means that they constitute a very small group compared to the rest of the population. More generally, the working population is small relative to those in non-productive age-groups, and this disproportion will increase. Over the next decade, the number of persons under 20 will increase by about 16 million and those over 65 by about 6 million, while the core of the labour force—men between 25 and 45—will *decrease* by about 2 million. Each working person will therefore have to support a larger number of children and aged than in the recent past. Mr. Drucker has pointed out that corporations were not yet attuned to this overriding demand for faster capitalisation, and he admonished business managers to stop making decisions in terms of pre-war conditions. His advice will certainly be taken, for during the next ten years the labour shortage will push every plant superintendent to increase productivity to its maximum.

To the extent that this difficulty is met, however, the problem of adjusting the economy in the following decade will be that much more difficult. In the middle 1960's, the boom babies will begin to seek jobs in unprecedented numbers. They will demand these openings of an economy that has just spent ten years eliminating every dispensable job—of factories equipped with electric eyes, of stores designed for the maximum amount of self-service, etc. What will happen then we cannot know; but we can be sure that that world, only ten years off, will be quite different from the one in which we are living.

William Petersen

The Boy Proust

The bedroom, lit, not light,
against the blackest evening
an evening can arrange,
helps the closing door to say goodnight

and grays itself to death;
the day is slammed to splinters;
they strike the boy's mild centre
wilder with each breath.

Love is at the downstairs window
blowing music to the drapes,
staring at tall and different shapes,
waiting for them to go.

Upstairs the boy lies patiently
planning a future for yesterday.

Arnold Weinstein

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Holstein's Memoirs and Historical Criticism

THE *éminence grise*, the "evil genius of German foreign policy," the "Oracle of the Wilhelmstrasse," the "monster of the labyrinth," "His Excellence the Spectre"—these, and a dozen others like them, are the titles by which it has been customary to describe the rôle of Friedrich, Baron von Holstein in the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II. If the description has been a true one, the memoirs, diaries, and correspondence of this man—especially when they have been collated with one another—are bound to have considerable importance for us. When the historiography of a given subject is immature, it is prone to exaggerate the machinations of some "spider" or to make ugly shadow-play with "hyenas" and "black hands." And, if Holstein should turn out to have been less exciting and less important than had been imagined, the very puncturing of such a myth is also a matter of no little significance. It is conceivable that Holstein gained undue notoriety as a result of his loneliness, or his secretiveness, or his unwillingness to explain himself to the world at large while he was actually alive. If so, the memoirs of such a man, whether they are self-revelations, or attempts to steal our confidence, or merely a last desperate endeavour to cheat posterity, must at least carry their electricity at a higher voltage than the rambling reminiscences of garrulous men.

It happens that two editors, who have worked on the main collection of Holstein papers and on the files of the German Foreign Ministry, have now found themselves seriously puzzled. They are the only historians who have used both sets of documents, though not quite the only ones who have seen the latter of the two collections. They can find in these papers* no trace of the sinister rôle that has been ascribed to Holstein, though this would seem to have been precisely the thing that they have been looking for. Editors may err, and it is likely that a great deal of detective-work will be necessary before we possess the solution of that famous Holstein riddle, which now becomes more puzzling and exciting than ever. But historians who are not editors may also be in the wrong, especially if they are battling to defend their own old war-horses or screaming at the threat to their conventionalised stories. And the chance of their making a mistake is not lessened if they have seen neither the bulk of the Holstein papers, which are still unpublished, nor the captured files of the German Foreign Ministry. The general student may have no desire to see guilt lifted from the shoulders of Holstein and redistributed amongst other people; and the experts have so pounded us with their reiterations that the most agile of us will find it hard to change his mind about this malignant spider of the Wilhelmstrasse. But if the two sets of primary sources—the private papers of the man concerned and the official papers of the office in which he worked—do not suggest anything of that dark and sinister rôle which has been imputed to Holstein, we are at least entitled to cross-question the experts now. And in particular we must ask: on what kind of evidence has the accepted view been based, and what are the kinds of sources that students of recent history regard

* *The Holstein Papers*. Edited by NORMAN RICH and M. H. FISHER. Vol. I. Memoirs and Political Observations. Cambridge University Press. 25s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as more cogent and authentic than the combination of these two?

If it is argued that Holstein would want to mislead the world in the memoirs, or must have sorted out his correspondence before his death—or that, in his official capacity, he may have taken care not to put the most questionable things on to paper—surely these are just the things which always present the main problem to the historian as he deals with the papers of political personages. Men do of course try to cheat their biographers and to carry some of their secrets with them into the grave; and the historian advances only by playing the detective all the time—he gains here and there because it is so hard for men to cheat consistently throughout their lives, or (if they can destroy their own evidence with sufficient thoroughness) to secure that their associates and correspondents in all countries will destroy the collateral evidence.

The papers of Holstein, as they gradually appear, will demand much of that genuine detective-work which helps to differentiate historical research from mere compiling; but it is necessary to be clear that scientific criticism is not a thing to be called into operation merely in the case of writers whom we happen to dislike in advance. The same fierce light of science will no doubt be turned, somewhere, some time, on whatever sources are responsible for the traditional picture we have had of the rôle of Holstein. Indeed, there is a general fallacy into which all historians, and particularly contemporary historians, are only too apt to slip. And if we do not particularly guard ourselves against its dangers, this fallacy is sufficient in itself to nullify the effects of all our pretended critical apparatus.

WHEN he had written his *Richelieu* in the famous "Foreign Statesmen" series, Professor Richard Lodge appended a note to explain why he denied the authenticity of that important document, Richelieu's "Political Testament." The only specific reason that he gave was that if the document were really authentic "the current estimates of Richelieu would have to be not merely added to, but profoundly modified." He appended the curious point:

> Especially the striking saying of Mignet that "he [Richelieu] intended everything which he achieved" would have to be abandoned and many results of his rule, which are now attributed to intelligent purpose, would have to be regarded as the product of chance.

The more we respect Professor Lodge, the more startling it becomes that, even where prejudice and passion are scarcely involved, the sheer conservatism of the scientist can be so decisive—one's mind lacking the flexibility necessary for changing one's framework even when the evidence is crying out for such a change. And the argument seems to be locked more tightly than ever in a circle when a Richelieu or a Philip II (or perhaps even, now, a Holstein) has come down to us as a traditional bogyman or as something of a sinister myth. The 18th century *philosophes* advanced historical criticism in certain respects, but with them, too, an *a priori* attitude often more than nullified the advantage of their supposed science. Criticism to them was a thing to be used against the documents of "the other party" and particularly against the Catholic witnesses. Voltaire himself firmly closed his eyes to evidence in favour of Richelieu's "Political Testament," while his successors—arbitrarily choosing which people's evidence to criticise away—carried historiography even further from the truth about such things as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Macaulay did not intend to be a Whig historian and even imagined himself to be rising above the historiography of mere faction. He was able to criticise evidence, but it seemed natural to him to turn the fire of his criticism or the frost of his scepticism upon the evidence of the Tories. It is difficult to convince oneself that the Right Wing is not the only one that gives untruthful or misleading testimony. The pitfalls are particularly numerous in the case of the testimony of personal memoirs.

In historical science, any kind of reporting —even the reporting of a man who is telling us about his own life—represents source-material of only an inferior kind. Even if a Foreign Secretary tells his best friend that he has given a certain order to a diplomat, this assertion requires a critical operation over and above that which would be needed if one actually held the written order in one's hands. Amongst the various forms of reporting, memoirs themselves are bound to occupy a fairly low place—lower for example than an

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ambassador's official report about an interview with a foreign statesman. It must never be imagined that the memoirs of virtuous and truthful men do not require an elaborate critical apparatus: for the best men forget significant things, or allow their memory to be coloured by after-events and wishful thinking. The best men have seen the events of their time within a particular framework, or they write to defend themselves, or they send their narrative along a capricious course. Twelve witnesses of a motor accident may so differ in their evidence as to make one despair of ever arriving at the truth. And one cannot reach the truth by merely asking which man had the reputation for honesty (since he might have been a poor observer) or by discovering which man had the better place for a view (since he might have been prejudiced). Yet even if he had only a dozen unreliable witnesses, and no firmer evidence to enable him to decide between them, the historian would not necessarily despair—the factual truth which he seeks may be one that no contemporary ever reported, no eye-witness ever realised. He need not despair of arriving at a truth which will not only convince his colleagues but also explain the discrepancies in the evidence. Ranke was too constricted if, as Acton often claimed, he thought that all problems were to be solved by looking for the "reliable witness," who was assumed to be discoverable somewhere, and who would know the actual answer. And the historian would not readily sacrifice an important witness, though he had a reputation for untruthfulness; for the historian does not just "believe," does not merely transcribe statements as based on "good" or "bad" authority; he criticises all the time, and often he transmutes the statements of all the witnesses, using their assertions for purposes which they themselves could never have had in mind. Some have even held that we should rely on memoirs only where their author is giving evidence against himself. Some have thought it more scientific to say that memoirs are to be trusted only when they give away things which the author did not realise that he was giving away. We need not be so unbelieving as this, but it is certainly true that memoirs require a critical apparatus—indeed every separate set of memoirs requires an elaborate critical apparatus of its own. Such apparatus

The Whispering Gallery

Autobiography I

JOHN LEHMANN

John Lehmann holds a unique position in the literary history of his generation, and this first volume of his autobiography, bringing the account to the beginning of the war, is not only important for the story it tells but also richly rewarding for the manner in which it is written.

Demy 8vo, Frontispiece, 21s. net

William Weston

The Autobiography of an Elizabethan

Translated from the Latin by
PHILIP CARAMAN

With a Foreword by EVELYN WAUGH

Following the success of his translation of John Gerard's autobiography—which "as an adventure story", wrote the *Manchester Guardian* critic, "ranks with the best of our own or any other age"—Philip Caraman has now translated from the Latin another equally remarkable Elizabethan autobiography, that of William Weston.

Demy 8vo, Illustrated, 21s. net

Living in the Clouds

CHARLES HUMANA

Charles Humana was highly commended by leading critics when his last novel, *A Lover for Lucia*, appeared. He now chooses a Parisian setting (one he knows well from personal experience) for his story of a young provincial Frenchman who, tired of being kept by a rich woman, breaks away to seek a new and purposeful existence, but finds tragedy instead.

Crown 8vo, 12s. 6d. net

LONGMANS

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can only be achieved by great detective work and we only begin to achieve it after the memoirs have been collated inch by inch with all the rest of the available evidence.

THE writing of history on the basis of memoirs represents a fairly primitive stage in the development of the historiography of a given subject; and Lord Acton seems to think, for example, that French Revolutionary history only began to pass out of that stage in the 1860s. Towards the middle of the 19th century, the publication of memoirs and correspondence relating to the early years of George III's reign carried historiography further from truth than before; and in this respect Horace Walpole's Memoirs of that reign had a particularly unfortunate influence. They had been written initially rather in favour of the King, and at this stage in their production had been more in line with Walpole's correspondence at the time when the events in question had been actually happening. But after 1775 many parts of them were re-written, and Walpole, having become the enemy of George III, projected his new opinions back into his account of even the earlier years of his reign. It is possible to go a long way on the strength of merely internal evidence in the disentangling of the older and newer layers of text; and one can go further still with the help of the correspondence, for Walpole's revision would seem to have been patchily done. Here is only one example of the manifold ways in which this man's memoirs can gradually be illuminated by the acquisition of a critical apparatus.

It is coming to be apparent from work on various sides that Croker holds a more important position in English historiography than has generally been believed; for in regard both to the French Revolution and the reign of George III he sharpened the critical procedures and in particular he helped greatly to undermine the authority of memoirs. Destructive criticism can be carried too far, however, and, after holding an exaggerated idea of Walpole's untruthfulness, Croker relaxed the severity of his judgment in a remarkable way as a result of the corroborations which he found when he edited Lord Hervey's Memoirs. It will be clear from all this that even Lord Grey's *Twenty-five Years* is a work that requires an elaborate critical apparatus. The Memoirs of Holstein are in the same position; they need a critical apparatus of their own. If we merely say that the statements of the one are "based on good authority" while the statements of the other are based on bad authority, we are in fact putting historical criticism back by something like two hundred and fifty years.

It must not be imagined, however, that the testimony of memoirs can normally be overruled by types of evidence that come still lower in the scale of values—the talk of politicians, for example, or the gossip of the town, or the agreed slanders that run in chosen circles as along a whispering-gallery. In cliques near to government, as in a closed academic body, rumour may seem unanimous and universal, and still not be worth the weight of the wind upon which it is carried. Two historians can clash in conference because both have obtained, straight from the horse's mouth—from nothing less than Cabinet level—accounts of a given episode which not merely diverge but are mutually exclusive. I am told that an army commander under cross-examination can pooh-pooh the evidence of his own despatches, and can say that these had been concocted with an eye to publication. If such a man insists, I may not know enough to justify my contradicting him; but I need not accept as a canon of scientific criticism the thesis that after this claim of his I must necessarily believe what he tells me as "the real truth" over a glass of port. Let us have an extra Scotland Yard detective for those historians who, finding themselves on the fringe of the charmed circle, so often seem to suffer a kind of self-enchantment. And, having suspended so many of the canons of scientific criticism, let us at least treat as severely as we should treat written documents the verbal secondhand testimony of men who claim to have "got the truth straight from the horse's mouth."

THE editors of *The Holstein Memoirs* appear to have done their work carefully and the translation, if it is not quite faultless, is well above the average. The text is not quite complete, but it is clearly shown wherever a passage has been omitted; and the editorial selection is guaranteed by a procedure which must be very unusual if not

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unprecedented in this field of fairly contemporary history. A microfilm of the entire body of papers is to be put at the disposal of scholars in England and the United States, though (possibly by some inadvertence) not apparently in Germany. By contrast, the papers of Lord Hardinge, who was Under-Secretary of State at the British Foreign Office from 1906 to 1910, are now in the Cambridge University Library, but are not released to the free play of scholarship since they come within our Foreign Office's "closed period." In one sense something of the reticence of the official historian seems to have passed into this separate piece of work which the editors are carrying out in an independent capacity. They outline the story of the Holstein papers down to 1945, but of events after that date—the dispute that has taken place concerning the ownership and the possession of the documents—they give us only a single sentence, and that one a prime example of official camouflage. Their statement is calculated to leave the reader totally unaware that there has been any trouble about the matter since the papers were captured by the victor-powers. The historian, however, will be none the less grateful to whatever forces and factors have put an end to the further concealment of these documents.

Holstein writes less about himself than most writers of memoirs, and often ably mimics (though this does not mean that he necessarily achieves) a clear and pondered objectivity. If he sets out to write an apologia or a defence it must be confessed that he shows an uncanny disposition to spend ink and paper on matters that are irrelevant to that object; and one wonders why such a man does not defend or excuse himself more. Like many writers of memoirs, he seems to talk of innumerable things concerning which he can apparently have had no particular interest in being untruthful. And when he counters a charge that has been made against him, he does not press the matter, like a man offering a desperate defence—he may be curiously laconic, merely saying, "This is all that I had to do with that question."

All this does not mean that he can escape criticism, for the writer of memoirs finds it only too easy to be untruthful or misleading, even when it profits him not. He may pervert

The Making of a Poem
STEPHEN SPENDER
'A book full of illumination . . . it has the lucidity both of poetry and criticism . . . Mr. Spender attains an imaginative understanding beyond the reach of ordinary systematic criticism, and makes us see the poet's mind working. That is the quality which makes this book so striking, and it is a rare one.'—EDWIN MUIR (*Observer*)
15*s.*

Bismarck
A. J. P. TAYLOR
'Combines scholarship with enthusiasm, and possesses such rare charm that the temperature of our interest rises to zest.'—HAROLD NICOLSON (*Observer*)
'Noteworthy both in itself and because it challenges widely accepted ideas.'—*The Times*
2nd impression *Illustrated* 18*s.*

America's Rise to World Power
FOSTER RHEA DULLES
A study of the developments in American foreign policy since the end of the 19th century.
Illustrated 30*s.*

The Public Philosophy
WALTER LIPPMANN
'A book to be studied and taken to heart. Few will not agree that it is frank and brave.'
—ARNOLD TOYNBEE (*Observer*) 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Selected Letters of Chekhov
Edited by **LILLIAN HELLMAN**
'His letters . . . make happy reading . . . The sanest, most balanced of writers.'—RAYMOND MORTIMER (*Sunday Times*) 21*s.*

Something of Value
ROBERT RUARK
'The material is so fascinating that you don't want to lose a paragraph . . . I cannot remember reading a better novel about a whole country, its problems and its peoples.'—JOHN DAVENPORT (*Observer*) 18*s.*

The Capri Letters
MARIO SOLDATI
Italy's biggest fiction success of recent years.
12*s.* 6*d.*

HAMISH HAMILTON

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the truth through passion or carelessness or a lapse of memory, or even through a disposition to believe evil of others. In one way, however, Holstein has a superiority over the ordinary polemical writer of the present day and his memoirs must have a certain advantage even over such works as Lord Grey's *Twenty-five Years*. He is not defending himself against the charge of having brought about the war of 1914 or being responsible for the downfall of the German Empire. He died in 1909, when his worst enemies assert that Germany was still striding exultantly to world-dominion. If he is troubled by anything it is primarily by the fact that, as early as 1908, Germany, by her tactlessness rather than her policy, had brought herself into ill-repute. He is not lying in order to defend himself or his country against charges which he can hardly have predicted that Germany, as a defeated nation, would have to meet. Or, if he foresaw what the post-1919 period was going to require of him in this respect, it would seem that we may have to revise our notion of the condition that Germany felt herself to be in before the First World War. The critical historian possesses the advantage at the finish, however. A man who leaves his memoirs to be published after his death lacks some of the motives for aberration which men may have when they seek to publish such works during their lifetime. But such a man cannot foresee the platform from which the future is going to judge his work—a pretty distant future, if publication does not occur for a period of nearly fifty years.

BUT if Holstein was not writing to defend himself against victor-powers or against the apostles of the "new diplomacy" which emerged after 1919, he may have written to defend himself against the charges made by his fellow-countrymen in his own time. We see at close quarters in these memoirs people like Bucher, Abeken, and Busch, whose names are familiar to the student of Bismarck; we learn about later figures, such as Marschall, and it is something even to have merely Holstein's views on Kaiser Wilhelm II. Students of diplomatic history are given some closer glimpses of the work of the German Foreign Ministry; and if it is not always certain that Holstein has an interest in deceiving us, it is true that he may fall into aberrations which will betray to us the defects of his own nature. It is possible that the prime issue which is raised by the memoirs is in reality the question of their treatment of Bismarck himself. Even if we should be able to discover almost a mathematical formula for Holstein's aberrations when he writes on this main topic, one may still hazard the suggestion that the Holstein papers are building up for us the best portrait of Bismarck that we have hitherto possessed. It is possible that Holstein is depicting a Bismarck who is very real and true to life, even though the memoirs show at times an animosity towards the man which others might not share.

At this point of the argument it is well to arouse oneself from slumber and see that at any rate the propagandists shall not be allowed to have it both ways. One who does not think so badly of Bismarck as many people do, and who at any rate does not share the actual desire that he should be found to be wicked, may claim, perhaps more appropriately than some (or at least with less offence) that Holstein's portrait of Bismarck and his view of the man's personality are not evidence that can be dismissed as of little moment. It is a vulgar travesty of historical criticism to argue: "Holstein hated Bismarck with an unforgiving hatred; therefore Holstein's evidence on Bismarck must be dismissed." If he hated Bismarck so much, he still insists, in respect of the crisis of 1875, that "I am firmly convinced that Prince Bismarck had no thought of going to war." He tells us that before consenting to the Spanish candidature, the Hohenzollern family had used an agent, Mme Cornu, to sound Napoleon III on the subject of the offer; and Napoleon had taken the question casually, giving no hint that he might have objections to the policy. Concerning the war of 1870 he says, "Bismarck handled the Hohenzollern candidature rather as one waves a lighted match over a gas tap to see whether it is turned on"—that is to say, for the purpose of discovering whether France was really eager for war. Against the repeated rumour that Bismarck had been working to exclude the Crown Prince Frederick from the throne, Holstein says: "I can positively assert that nothing came to my ears which could have led me to conclude that Bismarck had such a

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

QUEST

A bi-monthly of arts and ideas sponsored by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

Edited by
NISSIM EZEKIEL

Contents of the October issue

THE INTELLECTUAL IN INSURGENT ASIA
Statements by
PROF. G. D. PARIKH
PRABHAKAR PADHYE

PHILOSOPHY EAST AND WEST
A. BHARATI

"SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS"
SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH

FREEDOM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN
S. D. RAI

FILM AND CIVILISATION
ANISH GHATAK

POEMS, BOOK REVIEWS, SHORT STORIES
NOTES ON FILMS, MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

•

Subscriptions may be sent to ENCOUNTER
Single copy 2s. Annual 12s.

•

Army and Navy Building,
3rd Floor
148, Mahatma Gandhi Rd., Bombay 1

SKIRA ART BOOKS

PREHISTORIC PAINTING
(Lascaux: The Birth of Art)
by Georges Bataille
With 70 colour plates
Lge sq. 4to (11¾ x 9¾ in.), buckram, colour jacket, slipcase **£5 15s.**

Uniform with previous titles in
THE GREAT CENTURIES OF PAINTING series

GOTHIC PAINTING
With 110 colour plates £7 7s.

EGYPTIAN PAINTING
With 95 colour plates £7 7s.

BYZANTINE PAINTING
With 105 colour plates £7 7s.

ROMAN PAINTING
With 84 colour plates £5 5s.

ETRUSCAN PAINTING
THE 18th CENTURY
With 64 colour plates £4 4s.

MODERN PAINTING

by Maurice Raynal

For fifty years, before his death in 1954, Maurice Raynal was a close friend of the greatest modern painters; from the very start he championed Picasso, Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger and many others. No writer was better qualified than he to undertake this journey through a past so rich in great achievement that all contemporary art has been conditioned by it and all future art will stand indebted to it.

WITH 200 COLOUR PLATES

Royal 4to, cloth, slipcase, 350 pages, **£9**

ZWEMMER

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plan." In view of such remarks, when Holstein tells us that "Prince Bismarck's Russian policy after 1875 was governed by emotion and therefore unsound," it is not necessarily incumbent on us to regard him as writing solely out of malice. And as we cannot despise the special skills which made Holstein so important in his own department, we may be prepared to believe that such a judgment has a certain significance for us merely because it comes from such a man. When he defends the Crown Princess against the charges which Germans made against her in regard to the illness of Crown Prince Frederick, and says "I believe these reproaches to be unjust," his statement may have no relation to controversies of the present day. But in its relations to the controversies of bygone Germany, I see no reason at the moment to doubt that it may stand as a considered and honest judgment.

This man with the epic hatred of Bismarck often defends him; though he speaks, naturally enough, in reference to topics which were the subject of controversy in his own age. Bismarck was right in 1870–1 "in being unwilling to risk difficulties with other Powers for the sake of a triumphant entry into Paris." He "did right in helping to work against the restoration of the monarchy" in France at the close of the Franco-German war. After that, "in every case when war really did seem possible, Prince Bismarck showed a most zealous love of peace. He used to say: 'You know where a war begins but you never knows where it ends.'" "From 1878 until his dying day he reiterated . . . that he had never wished harm to Russia. . . . This assertion is undoubtedly true." In view of such remarks I must not necessarily regard Holstein as merely malignant when he says of Bismarck: "But after 1871 I never heard of one single example of his self-control." He paints the Chancellor as a man who was sometimes drunk with power—a man who could be "suspicious and pitiless, and sometimes took action on the strength of mere probability." He adds, however: "He did not delight in cruelty for its own sake."

Let us focus all criticism possible upon the places at which Holstein may be defending a case of his own—many of them episodes of considerable importance, concerning which it is something to know what Holstein wanted the world to believe. At the same time it would be folly to dismiss in advance some comments on Bismarck which must be remote from vested interests of this kind. "The black moods to which Bismarck was so frequently a prey were due as much to physical as to mental strain. I have scarcely ever known anyone so joyless. . . . During the year and a quarter I served under him [in St. Petersburg] Bismarck gave not one single dinner." He "liked to listen" when his wife "played classical music such as Beethoven"; and he "displayed considerable nobility of character in the way he bore with his wife's behaviour, which was at times appalling. He never winced at it, but would on rare occasions gently admonish her." Holstein tells of Bismarck's "gripping lively eloquence." "Detailed work was Delbrück's strong point, whereas Bismarck could only find patience for it in cases of paramount importance." Busch's book on the Chancellor missed "all Bismarck's more delicate shafts of wit. Only his more caustic remarks remained and even they had often been blunted." Bucher was annoyed when Bülow was placed between him and the Chancellor a little while after the war with France; but Bismarck, now that his main work was done, had merely arranged this in order to "ease his own burden." Herbert Bismarck wished to get rid of Schlözer in 1889; but his father refused to agree to this, because, as he said, he had "really got used to the old fogey." Probably in the late seventies, says Holstein, "I was saying to Princess Joanna how necessary it was for Bismarck to meet people, so that he should not live entirely cut off from society." It is curious that the spectral Holstein of tradition should seem so anxious, at least on occasion, about the human side of somebody else. He tells us at one point, "I have heard Prince Bismarck say more than once that one of the factors that made his early days as Minister-President difficult had been the King's age. Politicians did not give him many more years to live, and so were unwilling to bank on him."

IF THE memoirs of this spider of the Foreign Office are compared with the average work of a diplomatic historian, it might be thought that they offer us no inconsiderable amount of human stuff. From

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his first description of life with Bismarck in St. Petersburg, this supposedly bloodless sphinx shows an uncommon interest in discussing people and depicting miscellaneous aspects of life that escape the official files. Perhaps a further publication of his papers will make it more clear whether he describes Bismarck's failings with too much exultation, or feels that here is a great man with some greatly regrettable faults. And since he seems ready enough to do credit to the integrity of a number of people, we have perhaps still to learn whether he had too great bitterness at the heart of him, or whether his love of malicious stories (and his telescoping of these) may not make him seem more malignant than he really was. At least we are now going to be in a much better position to recover him as a human figure. The critical movement in 19th century historiography was not merely a matter of destruction and scepticism, and gained its real importance from its constructive side. And every new witness who was close to the relevant events is important to us; especially as he cannot anticipate the interests of a future generation—cannot know where to be on guard against unconscious self-betrayals.

Herbert Butterfield

THE GRANDCHILDREN OF SOCIALISM

A MODERN danger is insensitiveness through excess of experience. Most educated people have some notion of the agricultural revolution associated with the names of Coke and Townshend in the 18th century, but the far more drastic revolution in agriculture which has taken place in the last twenty years seems to have escaped notice. Helped by science fiction and vertigo-inducing statements from scientists, we are indeed bewilderedly aware of atomic energy, but it is a common complaint that most people take it all too calmly. But at least they take it, however dully, as something very remarkable, and that is more than can be said of the great achievement of modern times whereby extreme poverty has been almost abolished in Western societies by the operation of the Welfare system. Here there is no "social fiction" to keep the imagination aglow. When Mr. Hugh Dalton told of a song in his heart, he was treated as a figure of fun. No one has hymned Beveridgism or memorably declared that such things can make it bliss to be alive. What we mostly hear about the Welfare system are groans about the corruption of our youth under the shower of unearned benefits.

Few more despairing howls over such corruption have been raised than those recorded in Herr Bednarik's book *Der Junge Arbeiter —ein neuer Typ*, translated into internationalese English by Miss Renée Tupholme as *The Young Worker of Today: a New Type.** When first published in Vienna in 1953 this book caused a commotion, being regarded with approbation or disgust as containing new, startling, and challenging ideas about the working class. The English publishers compare it to *The Managerial Revolution*. This is unfair to Mr. Burnham's book, for *The Young Worker*, though giving much interesting information about Viennese working class life, is marred by grotesque lack of judgment and a massive confusion in language and thought remarkable even in a German sociological treatise.

The picture we are given is appalling. It seems (after peering through this needlessly darkened glass) that the young working people of Vienna (so nice-mannered and respectable when I last glimpsed them) have turned into the worst imaginable Teddy boys without exception; are utterly debauched by jazz and films; have respect for no one and nothing but themselves; and along with their socialist faith have lost all sense of loyalty to their fellows. The reason for this deplorable state of things is not easily discoverable from the muddle of this book, but in so far as an explanation emerges it is that socialists have unwittingly deprived their

* *The Young Worker of Today: A New Type.* By K. BEDNARIK, translated by RENÉE TUPHOLME. Faber and Faber. 10s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

followers of their spiritual heritage. The inter-war working class (who are praised as lavishly as their successors are blamed) made the error of doing too much preliminary spade-work: of destroying all traditional faith and leaving in its place only an ambition for self-betterment which can satisfy no deep need. They grab the gifts which the toil of their predecessors has gained for them, and so far from feeling that in this dawn it is bliss to be alive, they are only conditioned to whine for more.

Is any of this true? On looking closer (never easy through Herr Bednarik's opacities), one is often struck with the feebleness of the evidence which is brought to support these terrible accusations. While the author has almost nothing to say about the ill effects of the popular press—Austria may have a more civilised press than we do—he has an aversion to the cinema that borders on mania. He seems to regard films as the source of all wrong-doing, and he treats the inter-relation of dramatic fiction and real life as something without precedent. Without seeming to realise it, Herr Bednarik raises a most interesting question at this point. The evidence is that in certain past times, in England and France at any rate, the theatre had an enormous influence on life, but never through mass effect, only through the relatively small number of people who composed audiences. Today for the first time in history, millions can see drama through films. As with the old theatre the staple fare is violent and trashy melodrama, usually connected with crime, varied by cosy sentimentalism, and relieved by occasional works of art. Inevitably mass acquaintance with this sort of thing must affect behaviour; but need the new drama, unlike the old, only have a degrading effect upon those who look at it? When Herr Bednarik comes to driving the point home with illustrations, one may be surprised, and even a little disappointed, by the sort of things that have made him lose all confidence in the new type of worker. He once saw some young men in a tram who stood to attention and addressed each other by "absurd titles." They would not have done this if they had not seen a film about the Foreign Legion. Does that incident convert you to the Puritan belief that drama is the devil's net for souls? Then try this: "After seeing a good film in which Australian aborigines were shown, a whole gang of rowdies tried to imitate, in the street, the dances and songs they had seen and heard; it was clear by their comments that they had entirely overlooked the human aspect of the film." Thus even good films are occasions of sin to Austrian workers. Still unharrowed? Here is the climax then: "I know a group of young men who for some months amused themselves, at their work, by pretending to 'do each other in,' using their hands as imaginary revolvers." If that is not enough to make one say "Tut tut," I don't know what is. It should be added that Herr Bednarik does not often come out into the open as in these quotations. In most of the book the quality of his mind is shrouded by the pomposities of psychological and sociological jargon, as when he expresses the not obscure fact that people enjoy listening to dance music in the following ponderous terms. "It seems to me that jazz and swing have become the social instruments of expression both for the tension-urge (which cannot be satisfied in any other way) and for the flight from tension which is its counterpart." And then he is off again.

ONE is tempted to obtain comfort from a book of so much silliness and to assume that since it reads like nothing more than an older generation's grouse against a younger one, there is no need for alarm or anxiety about youthful workers. Unfortunately there is evidence that Herr Bednarik's absurdities are not the result of undisciplined imagination, but proceed, rather, from an incompetent effort to analyse real dangers. Margareta Berger-Hammerschlag's book, *Journey Into A Fog*,* which is worth ten of Herr Bednarik's, tells a very similar tale of youthful *Je m'en fichisme* among the young workers of the East End of London. A conclusion to which the reader is driven by both books is that socialism made a cardinal mistake when it insisted upon being a religion. It made its followers go to it for more than they could get from it, so that in the end they are impoverished in a new way instead of an old way, not enriched altogether. The last state is no better than the first.

* *Journey Into A Fog.* By MARGARETA BERGER-HAMERSCHLAG. Gollancz. 18s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Or so it might be if socialism, against all historical precedent and all that we know of human nature, were to continue in one direction for ever, without modification; and if the process which creates the bad sort of Teddy boy should prove to be immutable. So much of the consequence of modern working class prosperity is wholly repulsive: the popular illustrated press, the hideous sugary music of the cinema organ, the non-stop infantilism of radio and TV, the lunatic architecture, and so on, that it is easy to fall in with Herr Bednarik's mood and, while bewailing today, look to a recently vanished golden age when Society was happily integrated, and where the place of the Teddy boys was taken by a sturdy working class which was either rooted oak-wise in soil and tradition, or heroic with socialist self-sacrifice and vision. A half-hour with Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* should dispel such dreams and correct excessive pessimism about later developments. In Booth's day the lot of the working classes in this country was one of squalid misery for more than half of their total population, and one should remember that the late years of the 19th century compared well with early ones, and that compared with other countries England was the workers' Eldorado. The helplessness through degradation of those whom he wanted to help, sometimes reduced Booth to despair, and he said that the elimination of the most miserable class of all by systematic ill-treatment was probably an unavoidable social necessity. From the drawings of Phil May and George Belcher we know the working class women whom Booth knew, those clowns of misery among whom drunkenness was the common evil, from the most destitute even to the "deserving." Is it really a matter for hopeless tears that the grandsons of these women are not naturally disposed to the best taste, and sometimes show a touch of coarseness in their manners? That the young workers show little gratitude for their betterment is not to be laid to their charge alone. It is as much the fault of that elder generation of socialists (who are praised so extravagantly by Herr Bednarik) for having always preached the new political doctrine along party political lines. It always seems to me one of the worst disasters of party politics that all questions must be posed

TWO NEW VOLUMES IN

The Stratford Library

TO BE PUBLISHED SOON

Julius Caesar

by ALFRED DUGGAN

Elizabeth I

by DONALD BARR CHIDSEY

"A distinguished new series, the subjects unhackneyed, the authors ideal and the production most attractive."—*Frank Swinnerton.* 8*s* 6*d* each volume

HUTCHINSON

178-202 Great Portland Street, W.1

Kenneth Ingram

History of the Cold War

"masterly, lucid, readable . . ."
Liverpool Daily Post

"a factual and impartial account."
Times Lit. Supp.

"clear and unimpassioned."
Yorkshire Evening Post

"a valuable work of reference."
Northern Daily Telegraph

15/- net

Arland Ussher

Journey Through Dread

(A study of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre)

12/6

DARWEN FINLAYSON

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in terms of self-praise and villain-painting. As a result the abolition of poverty and the erection of the Welfare State have usually been represented to ordinary people as things very easy of accomplishment depending on good will only, and prevented only by ill will. Such teaching inevitably leads to underestimation of the whole enterprise, and has stimulated an idea among ordinary people that the past is something to be despised, that only the present and future are owed respect, and if you are young, that means you. Why should people of light education be expected to resist these flatteries? And why should the victims be blamed rather than those oak-like socialists of yore who spread the teaching? But there is surely no reason to suppose that the sillier side of socialism has captured human minds for ever. As a great force in politics, socialism is less than fifty years old. It is surely not too optimistic to suppose that it may continue to grow, and that though it may grow bad in many ways, as all things have done to date, it is likely to reach beyond the crude heresy that man lives by bread alone.

Christopher Sykes

OVER THE BORDER AND ROUND THE BEND

One of the more endearing characteristics of the Englishman is his readiness to assume that everybody else is probably one up. He is perfectly eager to agree that Chinese philosophy is profounder than European, that only the Indians understand true religion, that the ancient Egyptians knew all about the atom bomb but were too wise to do anything about it, that we have lost the secrets of the Old Masters' colours, that only gipsies can cure warts, that they order this matter better in France, and that Czespuhl is the Dickens of Bosnia. (Of course, about things that really matter, like Guinness and Grenadiers, he is without compromise—indeed, he will scarcely allow that other nations possess pretty villages or the rudiments of legal systems.) Small Celtic nations, on the other hand, have no such inhibitions: whence it comes about that one of the happiest bludgeons to the hand of the literary gamesman is the Scoto-Medieval ploy—"Spenser? Y-e-e-ss . . . but of course he derives very largely from Gavin Douglas."

Scots poetry, in fact, remains the great unexplored to the English common reader; and neither the dry-toast enthusiasm of the average academic medievalist, nor the preemptive brag of the average Scottish nationalist, do much to persuade him to it. It is a pity. In the first place, Scots is the only English dialect which has been raised to the level of an independent literary language.* The Scots literary tradition extends from the 14th century to our own day, with connections sometimes weak indeed but never wholly broken: there is nothing remotely comparable to this in Anglo-Welsh or Anglo-Irish — Anglo-American literature is the nearest parallel and it is obviously to date not a very close one. Scots is in fact, to put it perhaps a little over-forcefully, the only foreign literature written in a language tolerably nearly resembling our own.

In the second place, the two peculiar glories of Scots literature correspond to English deficiencies. A century that produced Malory and Skelton can hardly be written off as worthless, nevertheless it is evident that the 15th century is the English literary doldrums; whereas in Scotland it is a brilliant epoch — Dunbar and Henryson were the legitimate heirs of Chaucer, where Lydgate and Occleve were no more than official receivers. And the latter 18th century, notable in English verse principally for galloping

* The die-hard nationalist will, I am afraid, wince at my use of the word "dialect," which is for some inexplicable reason as much of a red rag to him as the phrases "Elizabeth the Second" or "North Britain," or that excellent and historic term "Scotch"; but it seems to me that most of the frameable definitions indicate that Scots is indeed a "dialect" rather than a "language."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arterio-sclerosis of the imagination, bred up in Scotland that poet in whom, more than in any of his fellow-islanders before or since, the movement of his imagination and the music of his line have been at one. Burns, moreover, provides the English reader with something else that is not to be found in literature south of the Border, the voice of a "common man" that is yet neither quaint nor homely nor ill-assured; for "South British" poetry is, when all is said and done, almost exclusively the poetry of "gentlemen," with all that that implies for good or evil.

UNTIL now there has been no sufficiently satisfactory guide-book to Scots poetry to which the uninformed and inquisitive reader could be directed. *Scottish Poetry: a Critical Survey** goes some way towards supplying this deficiency. This is a collection of ten essays by different hands, each devoted to some special period or aspect of the subject; the range is as wide as possible, and includes such esoteric matters as the Scots neo-Latinists of the Renaissance, such depressing ones as the poets of the later 19th century (who were unimportant in an almost monumental way), and such brave attempts as that of Dr. George Kitchin to assess the contemporary writers in Lallans. (There is nothing, however, beyond a cursory note, upon Gælic poetry—a subject to itself, quite rightly excluded, and which deserves another volume.) The reader therefore need make no complaint of lack of information, and in many ways he will find *Scottish Poetry* quite a usable Baedeker.

He will not, however, find it very much more. For one thing, it suffers rather severely from being a compilation, in that the wider issues never get discussed at all—each contributor is, properly enough, concentrating on his own particular kail-yard. Of the host of questions that will spring to the reader's mind, he will find almost none answered: he will look in vain, for instance, for any general discussion of what precisely is Scottish poetry and what is not—why are the heroic couplets of James Thomson, of *The Seasons*, Scottish, whereas the blank verse of that London Scot, Ben Jonson, is not? One would have thought some definition of this sort a necessary preliminary to a work of this nature. Again, he will find nothing whatever on the linguistic question: what distinguishes Scots from English, at what historic period could it first be so distinguished, and how did this come about? He will note also a curious "isolationism" in most of the writers—a strange ignorance, or ignoring, of contemporary English letters of all periods, coupled with the determination to bolster up that hoary old fairy-tale of Scotland's being less insular, more continental, than her sister country. He should also be warned (in case he should not yet have discovered it) that academic dullness and timidity are no guarantees of accuracy: the facts are usually correct enough (though in the case of one or two contributors not even this can be said), but the interpretation is frequently distorted, sometimes perhaps by national pride, as where the Henryson of the *Testament of Cresseid* is seriously compared to Chaucer as an analyst of human character, or the un-Latinity of Gavin Douglas's Scotland is not so much as hinted at; sometimes by prudishness, as in the total absence of

* *Scottish Poetry: a Critical Survey*. Edited by JAMES KINSLEY. Cassell. 30s.

JUST PUBLISHED

STYLE

by F. L. LUCAS

Fellow of King's College, Cambridge
University Reader in English

The book consists of lectures given at Cambridge; but they are here expanded for the general reader, with the addition of illustrative passages that make it not only practical criticism but also a lively anthology of flowers (and weeds) from Homer to Tacitus, from the Bible to Newman, from Chaucer to Virginia Woolf, from Froissart to Anatole France.

CASSELL 18/- *net*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reference to Burns's poetic bawdy; but sometimes (and this is really serious) by what can only appear to be mere lack of literary taste or judgment. Evaluation of poetry is, of course, at least partly a matter of individual judgment, nevertheless I find it hard to "take" a history of Scottish poetry that does not concern itself with Dunbar's *Goldyn Targe* or his *Thrissill and the Rose*, or with Burns's *Jolly Beggars*. And amidst the welter of mid-Victorian poetasters the bemused reader will find no signpost directing him to Alexander Smith, whose *Glasgow* is surely one of the finest of neglected minor poems.

This is, in fact, a Baedeker without stars, both in the sense that the lack of proper emphasis upon the masterpieces can only bewilder the uninitiated reader, and in the sense that few of the individual contributors shine. Worst fault of all, it seems to me that none of the articles would be in the least likely to inspire enthusiasm or to lead the reader on to a closer acquaintance with the works discussed. I hope that I am wrong. At the same time it is only fair to make it clear that the book is good straight sixth-form stuff on a not very elevated literary level, and that it goes at least part of the way towards filling a gap in the critical bookshelf that has too long been apparent.

Hilary Corke

THIS GENTL'D ISLE

It is largely true, I imagine, that foreign ideas about the English character are based upon that small section of the English population styled, and styling itself, the upper middle class. This is by no means surprising, for foreigners have had little means of knowing anything about the greater proportion of English people—the mass of plain "middle class" and the working class. England itself was not an important centre for tourists. Like the United States, we were largely known by the travellers we sent abroad and they were almost exclusively drawn from the upper middle classes and that tiny section, with which no general survey of England need be much concerned, the upper classes. Both these conditions are now changing: many more Europeans visit us, and a larger sample of Englishmen travel abroad. Nevertheless, popular conceptions of national characters change slowly and it is likely to be some time before foreign nations change their stereotypes of the English character in the light of the people they actually see here or in their own countries. Probably more important, anyway, than personal contact is the view purveyed in English novels and English films. Once again, particularly in novels, the picture remains largely that of the upper middle classes. That is to say that the foreign picture of English character is based on less than ten per cent of the English people, and those mainly resident in London or the South. Any foreign stereotype of another country is, of course, fragmentary and distorted. Nevertheless, in most countries the peasantry, the general middle classes, and even the industrial working classes have a central place in the national picture presented to the rest of the world. In England, on the whole, they do not.

Mr. Geoffrey Gorer's *Exploring English Character** is therefore a unique picture of the English middle and working class. The survey was based upon a detailed questionnaire sent to readers of *The People*, a Sunday newspaper read by few people in the ten per cent of the upper social classes, and one with an unusually wide male readership. The slight distortion of the resulting picture, then, lies in the omission of "ladies and gentlemen" and in a small preponderance of men respondents. This slight distortion is so exactly the opposite to the usual picture given of English social life that it is to be welcomed. The charting of such comparatively unknown, yet vitally important, social territory inevitably makes very exciting reading; what was not so easily to be guessed was how emotionally moving the picture would be. Indeed, if I have any criticism to offer of Mr. Gorer's excellent editing of the information, it is that he has too great a sensibility. It would be impossible, I imagine, for any sensitive person to read these 10,000 replies with-

* *Exploring English Character*. By Geoffrey Gorer. Cresset Press. 30s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out being moved to admiration and, in some degree, to sadness. Mr. Gorer is moved to both. To have omitted his feelings from the survey out of some preconceived notion of scientific detachment would have falsified his findings. I think, however, that *Exploring English Character* would have gained by being divided into two parts—statement of results and commentary. As it is, it is often difficult to recall what was the majority view and what the particular and striking expression of it.

MR. GORER started with a number of assumptions about the English character. His first assumption was that the apparent striking absence of aggression in England would be a central key to their character. With this assumption I am in entire sympathy. It has, indeed, been my central preoccupation in writing fiction about the English. I do not think that anyone who contrasts England today with England in 1800 can fail to wonder what has become of the violence and aggression of the English people in these last one hundred and fifty years. The results of the survey completely justify this first assumption. It is clear that the English people as a whole are deeply obsessed with restraining any element of violence. They rate gentleness very high as a virtue, they regard loss of temper as a major sin. They believe in discipline for themselves and for their children. Mr. Gorer devised one peculiarly clever question which revealed a great deal in this respect. How early, he asked, should children be taught cleanliness? Modern medical opinion is clear that to "pot" children too early is a waste of time. This view is probably taught in most English prenatal clinics. Nevertheless only a minority of English take notice of it. For the overwhelming majority, "potting" cannot start too early; nor would it seem that the experience of one or two children changes their view. The discipline of toilet hygiene is a symbol to English people of the need for early self-mastery. The survey shows that hell and the devil are largely dying beliefs even for the sixth of the population who are regular churchgoers, but they clearly retain some belief in "the old Adam" in their view of the nature of children. Undisciplined children, one cannot but think, demonstrate all too clearly the unmasked violence and aggression the English suppress so firmly. Children, pet animals, gardens, all these are essential outlets for English aggression in the form of mastery and control; equally, as one would expect, conduct that goes over the border line into cruelty towards children or animals or spoliation of gardens is peculiarly heinous. The resulting reverence for law and order is outstanding in the modern world. The response to Mr. Gorer's questions about "fiddling" suggests—as he rightly points out—that it is dangerous to add too much burden in the form of minor laws and regulations to a population that spends so much energy in suppressing its aggression.

What, however, surprised the author most, and what I imagine will surprise most readers, is the degree to which the English public admires and even venerates its police. The policeman with his special qualities of physique and his average qualities of intelligence is clearly an ideal figure to most English people. It is a veneration which seems to me a little dangerous but, probably, in view of the non-military character of the police, it is as safe a symbol for the virtues of discipline and order as we can hope to find.

THE survey in addition covers English views of love, sex, and marriage; religion and "luck"; leisure, friendship, and "the neighbours." To speak of the rich mine of information which it offers in the course of a review is impossible. Again and again, questions occurred to me which Mr. Gorer had no space to answer in his book. Young married couples, it seems, find little need for outside companionship or activity. Many older married women, however, clearly would like an occasional evening with other men than their husbands. Other older women find an outlet in chapel, church, or voluntary association. It would be most rewarding to see some correlation between the young wives who wished only the company of their husbands and those who later were dissatisfied. In what areas, of what class and income, are those who join societies? Of which type those who sit at home and wish for another man? The answer would surely throw much light on the famous English dominant mother.

By and large, Mr. Gorer is impressed by the dull lives of the English and by their

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Habits change

But habits also grow. The habit of reading *The Times* usually lasts a lifetime. It begins at school or university and is proof against mere fluctuations of newspaper fashion. Those of us who look for full and accurate news find it in *The Times*. We come to depend on *The Times* for a reliable account of the day's events and the world's opinion, and we soon discover there is no substitute for

THE TIMES

THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

FOR more than seventy years the Society has been the spokesman of British authorship and has fought for authors' collective and individual rights. Its Committees get things done and its Secretariat is uniquely qualified to advise members on their legal problems and questions about the marketing of their literary work in every medium.

¶ *Practising authors who are not already members should write for particulars of the Society and its affiliated bodies, the League of Dramatists, the British Screen and Television Writers Association, and the Radio and Television Writers Association to:*

The Society's offices

84 DRAYTON GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.10

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

goodness. It is, indeed, a formidable picture of self-restraint, moral scruple, and orderly citizenship. When so much energy is used in being civilised, it is not surprising that one of the sins we accuse ourselves of is sloth. It is an unfortunate price to pay in a highly competitive world, but it is hardly too big a price for being gentle and law-abiding.

Angus Wilson

TAMING LEVIATHAN

THE maintenance of relations between nations—or since nations are a comparatively recent development—between separate powers of whatever kind depends on a series of commonly accepted conventions of conduct. Double dealing up to a point may be expected and accepted, but how much double dealing is a delicate question which different ages have solved in different ways. Count Gondomar, Spanish ambassador to England in the reign of James I, was never able to discover how or where his despatches were tapped on their way back to Madrid and was interested to discover the secret years later when talking it over amicably with the English ambassador in Spain who knew the answer. The spying and counter-spying was all very much a part of the game in the epoch when Sir Henry Wotton wrote the bare truth —though a thought too free to please his monarch—when he described an ambassador as one sent to lie abroad for his country's good.

The conventions have varied through the ages. Diplomatic relations remain possible as long as the conventions, whatever they are, are more or less accepted and adhered to. They become impossible, or at least very difficult, when the parties concerned accept and act on different conventions. When the social and moral order is changing rapidly there is bound to be a period of transition in diplomacy, just as there is when two types of civilisation, which have not before been in close contact, come to have relations with each other.

Oddly enough this aspect of history—not so much diplomatic history as the framework of diplomatic convention which lies behind the political relations of powers or peoples—has been neglected. We read our European history, from the decline of the Middle Ages to the emergence of the nation states, from the 15th to the 17th century, as a series of dynastic quarrels, aggressions, religious wars, and shifting alliances, without paying very much attention to the character of the diplomacy which accompanied them.

This was, of course, a prolonged time of transition, during which nothing changed more radically than the diplomatic conventions. Modern international diplomacy came into being, and because we still live (more or less) within that convention, we tend to accept it as permanent and natural. Instead, we should study it as the unexpected product of new conditions.

Medieval Christendom had been in theory united. This was a beautiful idea which had singularly little relevance to the actual facts, Western Europe being almost continuously a prey to war and disorder. But the modern ambassador, resident in a foreign country to represent the interests of his own, had no place in this theoretically united world. Ambassadors acted only as the individual messengers from one prince or prelate to another, and it would appear that almost any ruler who had the need to send an ambassador had the right to do so; the privilege was not confined to sovereign princes.

The Italian city-states were the first who felt the need of keeping representatives abroad to protect the interests of their own people. Modern diplomacy was sketched out in the trading and political relations of these rising city-states, which were themselves models for the nation-states which came to dominate the European scene by the end of the 16th century. Long-drawn-out treaties between dynasties played their part too; the ambassador sent to deal with a particular problem might become something very like a resident ambassador before the treaty was concluded or finally abandoned.

MR. MATTINGLY, whose biography of Catherine of Aragon combined human

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

insight with scholarly accomplishment, shows himself equally at home with this wider, more general, and yet more intricate subject.* He illustrates the development of the new diplomacy with quotations from contemporary writers and with illustrations from the treaty-making and -breaking of the epoch. He does justice incidentally to the most diplomatically conscious and conscientious British sovereign, the much-abused King James I. He leads us by easy stages from the universal theory of the Middle Ages through the jungle diplomacy of the 16th century to the emergence of new codes and acceptances with Grotius's *Laws of War and Peace*. Mr. Mattingly sums up admirably what Grotius did for a world which had finally abandoned both the theory and practice of medieval Christendom. "From first to last his argument was arranged to appeal to rational men and men of goodwill, yes, but to such men living in a society which had accepted Leviathan."

That sentence may serve to show that Mr. Mattingly's book is history for the modern reader as well as for the scholar. The bewildered heirs of the Renaissance, we find ourselves today faced with a world situation for which our weapons of diplomacy are hardly adequate. It is no good lamenting that none of this would have happened to us if we had rejected the new learning, the new technologies, and the new adventure, and had stayed quietly at home within the Christian medieval fold. Facing a situation which, on a far larger scale, is curiously like the Western European situation in the divided and violent 16th century, we have got to think again. Mr. Mattingly concludes: "The next significant effort to achieve the rule of law among nations could not confine itself to the heirs of a single tradition. It would have to embrace mankind." His sane, learned, and witty account of one great epoch of transition is by no means irrelevant to the epoch of transition in which we live.

C. V. Wedgwood

* *Renaissance Diplomacy*. By GARRETT MATTINGLY. Cape. 25s.

a NEW magazine

Books and Bookmen

First number · October · out September 10 · monthly · 1/6

INSIDE NO. 1

J. B. PRIESTLEY
RICHARD CHURCH
VYVYAN HOLLAND
DORIS LESSING
and others

If your newsagent cannot supply BOOKS AND BOOKMEN *send 1s. 8d. for a copy by post from the publishers, Hansom Books, 21 Lower Belgrave St., London, S.W.1*

BELLOMETTI

LE PERROQUET RESTAURANT

31, LEICESTER SQUARE

WHI. 2996

IN THE HEART OF ENTERTAINMENT LAND

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Camera Press

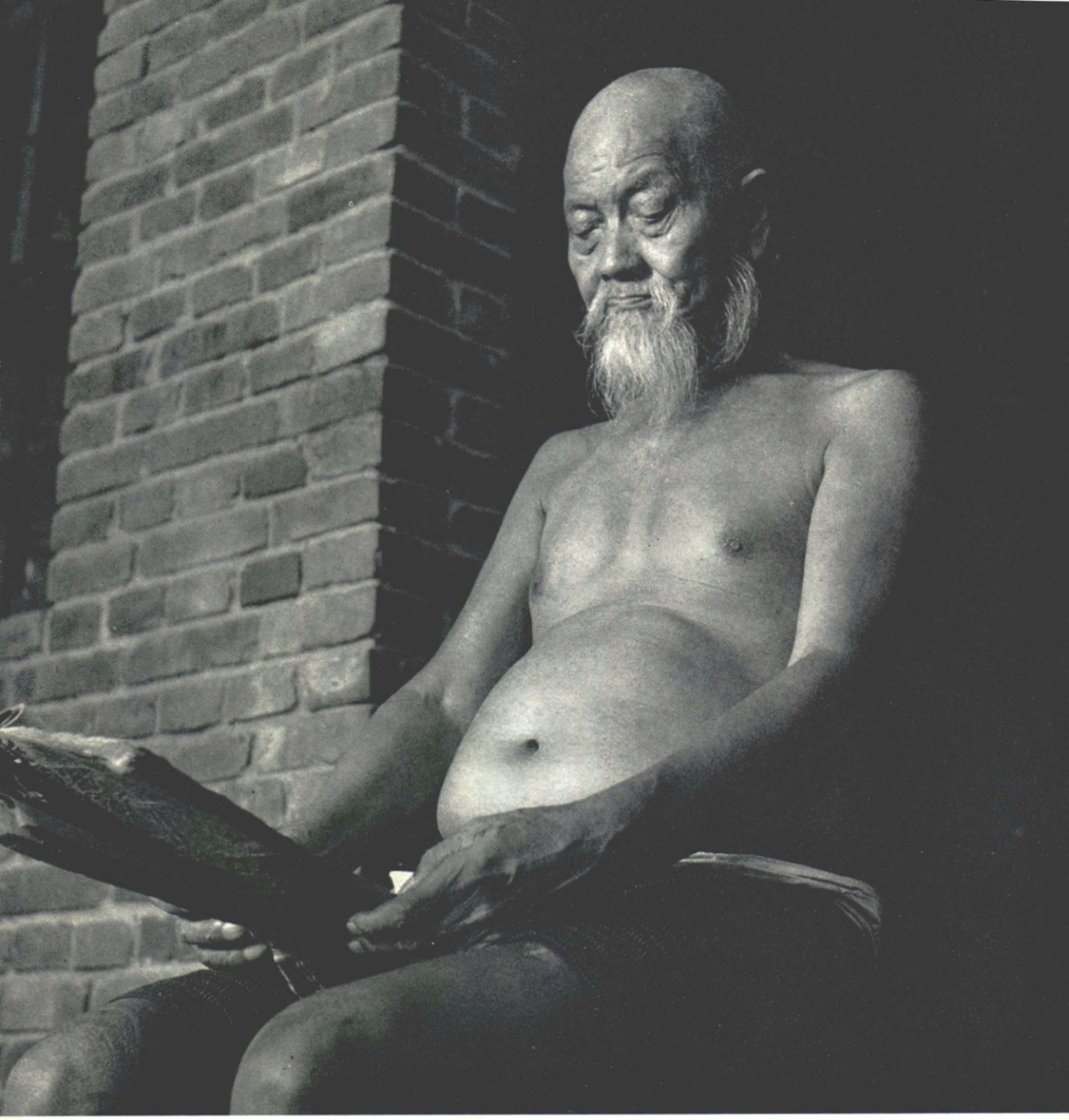
In the lowlands the fields are either rice or sugar cane. Here a farmer ploughs his rice field

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Camera Press

Aborigine woman

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Camera Press

Formosan patriarch

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Camera Press

Formosan funerals are elaborate, whenever the family has money to spend, as in the case of this grandmother of a large and well-to-do peasant family. Children are kneeling in dirt of roadside before taking coffin to cemetery

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM

An International Conference Sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom
Milan, September 12–17, 1955

Among the topics to be discussed are:

Economic Ideologies and Economic Reality in the West and in the Communist World
The Problems of a "Mass Society"
The Use and Abuse of Free Institutions
Nationalism, Authoritarianism, and Totalitarianism in the 20th Century
Consensus and Dissent in a Free Society

Papers and addresses by:

CARLO ANTONI GERMAN ARCINIEGAS HANNAH ARENDT RAYMOND ARON KARL BEDNARIK DANIEL BELL FRANZ BÖHM K. A. BUSIA COLIN CLARK ERIC DA COSTA R. H. S. CROSSMAN ELY DEVONS SUMITRO DJOJOHADIKUSUMO CONSTANTIN DOXIADIS R. P. DUBARLE MERLE FAINSOD MICHAEL FREUND HUGH GAITSKELL ALDO GAROSCI J. K. GALBRAITH STUART HAMPSHIRE FRIEDRICH V. HAYEK DENIS HEALEY RITA HINDEN SYDNEY HOOK G. F. HUDSON HANS ILAU HENRI JANNE BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL KAMAL JOUMBLAT GEORGE KENNAN TAKEYASU KIMURA HANS KOHN LIBERO LENTI ARTHUR LEWIS SEYMOUR LIPSET THEODOR LITT CZESLAW MILOSZ JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN ZENGO OHIRA TOMOO OTAKA G. D. PARIKH HERBERT PASSIN JOHN PLAMENATZ HELMUT PLESSNER MICHAEL POLANYI GERHARD RITTER DENIS DE ROUGEMONT EDUARDO SANTOS ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR. JOSEPH SCHOLMER EDWARD SHILS MANÈS SPERBER WALTER TRITSCH PETER WILES BERTRAM D. WOLFE W. S. WOYTINSKI

Inquiries should be addressed to the
General Secretary,
Congrès pour la liberté de la culture
104 Boulevard Haussmann
Paris 8

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STATE OF FRANCE

Herbert Luthy

"Occasionally a book is published that is so comprehensive in coverage, so incisive in insight, and so bold in its interpretations that it acquires a great reputation and is read by intellectual leaders for generations. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote such a book, here is another. Mr. Luthy analyses the characteristics of French civilization. He is a gifted writer who brings to his work not only vast learning and impressive powers of lucid organization of material, but also much verbal grace and dash. *New York Times.* 30s.

STUDIES IN COMMUNICATION

Edited by Professor B. Ifor Evans

Ten Essays on communication in human thought and behaviour and the success of human organizations including:

What is Communication?	A. J. Ayer
Communication in Biology	J. B. S. Haldane
Influence of Language on Medicine	J. Z. Young
Interpretation of Visual Symbols in the Arts	R. Wittkower
Colloquial English and Communication	R. Quirk

21s.

THE JET-PROPELLED COUCH

Robert Lindner

Five true psychoanalytical tales full of the excitement and surprises of detective fiction. "I have now read several books of this genre of converting a case history into a dramatic story, and consider Dr. Lindner's new book to be the most brilliant of any. He has the gift of vivid writing without exuberant exaggeration." *Dr. Ernest Jones.* 15s.

SECKER & WARBURG

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED